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MEN and FORCES OF OUR TIME

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TRANSLATED BY
EDEN and CEDAR PAUL

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MÄNNER UND MÄCHTE DER GEGENWART

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TO THE MEMORY OF MY FRIEND

PAUL LEVI

I DEDICATE THIS BOOK

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Biography
and Biographers

BIOGRAPHY AND BIOGRAPHERS

I

BIOGRAPHY is full of tender affection.

Angélique and Agnès, two young women—pale, nervous, somewhat melancholy, tormented by ambitious dreams—live, surrounded by a few hermits, in the solitude of Port Royal des Champs. The Church regards them with disapproval and the all-powerful Cardinal Richelieu threatens them. The two sisters, full of the grace of God, want to be like the angels; they mortify the flesh, sing the Jubilate, refresh themselves at that source of piety, the Lives of the Saints; and they hope to counteract the sacrilegious wit of Rabelais, the scepticism of Montaigne, the heresy of the sixteenth century. Angélique and Agnès build an edifice of faith that shall shed its rays over all seas and lands, shall exert an influence which lasts for centuries; and they enter into an unparalleled union with Blaise Pascal, the imperishable teacher.

Bonaparte, an officer turned adrift, goes for a walk along the Seine. His only possessions are the pawn-ticket of his watch and the manuscript of a pamphlet he is writing—a high-flown and absurd communist pamphlet. Paris seems to him nothing but a desert of bricks and mortar, which does not offer him so much as a crust of bread. He is hopelessly despondent; can hardly even think, as he stares moodily into the water and feels himself to have reached the end of all things—a step or two aside, and his troubles will be over. At this same hour a somewhat befuddled lieutenant, cheerful in his cups, making his way homeward, loses himself in the darkness, and suddenly, reeling a little in his perplexity, finds himself face to face with Bonaparte. They are old acquaintances. The lieutenant, with the insight not uncommon in the lesser degrees of drunkenness, notes the signs of discomposure in his friend's countenance. "What makes you so glum, old chap, love or money?"—"Money, because I have none!"—Three louis-d'or come to the rescue of despair. With this sum in his pocket he can give life another trial, and the trial is so successful that people no longer talk of "louis" but of "napoleons."

Lenin drags out his days in furnished lodgings at Zurich, in a dark, narrow, and sombre by-street. The longer the war lasts, the more opinionated and querulous does he become. To the rare visitors, this short, thick-set fellow complains that, except for himself, every one in the world is wrong; he is convinced that all who differ from him are scoundrels, talks of the overwhelming importance of his six friends, of his and their mission to dictate laws to the five continents. A madman who dons a paper helmet, brandishes a tablespoon, and proclaims himself Jupiter, imagines the same sort of thing. Is Lenin a fool or a prophet?—Neither fool nor prophet, but a dialectician, assured that impotence can issue from power and power from impotence. No one before him has ever thought so little about himself, and no one before him has ever changed so fundamentally the outward semblance of a part of the world.

II

Biography is not full of tender affection because the writer loves his hero, but because it embodies a life—and all existence is melodrama. Devotees of ambition, of power, of the idea, set to work with the intention of enriching the world or themselves. In reality they are working in order to die. Besides, does not completion imply the onset of decay? Does not every successful piece of work make an end of itself? Has not nature prescribed for every one much the same measure of happiness, a measure which is strictly limited and cannot be surpassed? Is Caius Julius Cæsar, when after a succession of almost incredible and unexampled victories he has become ruler of the world, any happier than a simple legionary for the first time caressed by the woman of his heart's desire? Angélique, Agnès, Bonaparte, Lenin, and the rest of them who are enrolled in the official calendar of heroes, are unable to shape the world in accordance with their various imaginings. All they can do is to move it, functioning as the levers which shift huge masses. History no less than physics is, we may presume, subject to inviolable laws. We do not know these laws, because we do not know all the interconnexions of nature at large; and that is why the ebb and flow of events we term history seems to us cold, heartless, appalling. Flaunting itself as war, revolution, or pretentious schemes of universal reform, history, like a tank on the rampage, crushes all the living and all the dead, and stamps them flat into the dust. A sophist in Athens, on the eve of important happenings, ran through the streets shouting: "Stay at home tomorrow, good folk. If you don't, you will be run over!"

Confronted by history, which is at one and the same time abstract and concrete, which stimulates curiosity without gratifying it, which merely states problems without solving them—youths, women, idlers, travellers, visitors to health resorts, convalescents, persons unfitted for active occupation, all who devote themselves to reading as a pastime, often turn to biography. Disclosing personality, it acts as a stimulus, brings consolation, provides repose. Amid the blind wrath of the forces of nature and society, despite the prevalence of destruction and the apparent reign of chance, individuals it would seem can play a part in the world! The intellect makes plans, the will carries them out, and the rhythm of unknown forces tries to establish order. Nature mixes the ingredients of a brain much as chemists mix various fluids in their retorts. The result of these mixings is for every one as great an enigma as a chemical formula is to the uninitiated. The delicate perceptions, the intuitions, the feelings of an individual can disclose what is obscure to the multitude. An army without a general is like a blind man without a leader. One man with exceptional gifts can do more for the spread of an idea than innumerable noisy organizations, and one head is worth more than a township of buzzing voices. It was to this instinct, with which outstanding personalities are endowed, that Wilhelm von Humboldt referred when he wrote: "What I want to do is to influence the aggregate, to influence the character of mankind, and every one gets to work upon this who gets to work upon himself and himself alone."

One who has fallen to a hero, one who has affectionately surrendered to this form of admiration, becomes reconciled to history. Thereupon the anarchy of the past and the inscrutability of the present assume the aspect of a manifold entity which is as pleasing and as wonderful as the colours and the shades of nature. Then, biography in hand, the reader will sit contemplating the events of history (at once simplified and complicated by the individual touch until a single leading idea is seen to run through them like a red thread) with the same delight as that with which one who is safe on land watches a storm at sea.

Indeed, every book brings consolation. We read to find something, to feel the breath of another's vitality, to get companionship in our loneliness, to secure a living contact with the past. The written word is a stream of thought which glides through all barriers; it is a magic influence which can make itself felt everywhere at the same instant. One phrase can caress a million human beings, and yet remain as chaste, as immaculate, as in the hour of its birth. Biography has not only these general qualities of the written word, but also its own peculiar gift of grace. To the youth it reveals possibilities, like a harbour in which hundreds of ships and thousands of men are eagerly awaiting departure. To those of riper experience it discourses concerning the illusions of ambition and of happiness. Numberless failures, Schlemihls, unprinted authors, broken-down actors, briefless barristers, old maids, ruined speculators, regard themselves as the martyrs of fate; they are convinced that the fires of genius or the beacons of talent glow in them unrecognized; and one and all they can find solace in biography. The evil fortunes of those who were brilliant successes help to blunt the claws of envy. Cæsar was assassinated, Schopenhauer could not find a publisher, Bismarck was sent to the right-about, Saint-Just was guillotined in the flower of his youth. Were it not that the world is seen to be fundamentally "unjust," the masses of the ambitious of one sort and another would find life intolerable.

III

Can any one describe another's existence? Is not everything uncertain except the officially registered dates of birth and death? Is it possible to know the truth about a life? The biographer fancies he knows, not only the historical atmosphere, that primeval forest of uncertainty wherein an Alexander of Macedon and a market porter have alike to seek the possibilities that lie open to them, but also the hidden determinants of the "hero's" humour, his varying judgments, his particular actions—knows like a poem learned by heart these motives which were unknown even to the individual concerned. For, above all, the biographer knows more than the biographee! He comments; he analyses; and in order to show forth the wonder of development he quotes a sentence from his subject's first school-essay and the concluding passage from the last will and testament. "The deuce take them, these infernal commentators," growls Lessing. "With all this rabble about, one will soon be afraid of having any more flashes of insight!"

The heroes and the tellers of heroic deeds had a gay time of it during the Middle Ages, for then, next to the mystery plays, the Lives of the Saints were most in request. According to these "sources," the princes of the Church invariably accepted their utterly unexpected election reluctantly, shedding tears of contrition. But the elect of the republic of letters, no less than the elect of the Church, enjoyed the grace of paradisiacal information, creating unhindered out of that fount of inspiration. Abbot Ado of Glanfeuil informs us that he bought the life-history of St. Maurus from a pilgrim fleeing before the Normans. Many of the most eminent among the pious reappeared several years after death in order to hand their biographies to contemporary historians and then vanished for good. St. Placidus actually came down from heaven to have his portrait painted on earth. A reporter made a pilgrimage to Syracuse, in search of the spirits of the martyrs as well as their souls. Here, amid the lordly ruins of Græco-Roman splendours, he found the story of St. Alban's martyrdom; he knelt while tearfully expressing his thanks, and proposed to carry off the text to Rome. But the parchment crumbled into dust at the first touch. Nevertheless, the worthy pilgrim never forgot what he had read, so that the biography of this saint became sublime beyond compare.

When in modern times the "writers of literary portraits" tell us that, as concerns the individualities of those whom they regard as ripe for having biographies printed and sold, love letters are no less important than current events, they are drawing from the same sources of inspiration as their medieval colleagues. Love letters are unquestionably documents that are no less momentous for the characterization of an epoch than is Cardinal Richelieu's political testament in its bearing on the rise of the modern monarchy. They show the shadow-play, the sentiments, the landscape of the feelings, in which men and women grow up, in which individuals are formed; they are footsteps in the sands of history. But love letters, requests for a friendly loan, letters exchanged between chums, reports of illness, last wishes, cordial greetings, wails of melancholy, and outbursts of joy—these are only significant for the hours in which they were written or uttered. Who does not pass through crises which he looks back on with amazement as the most improbable of occurrences, crises of lunacy, of paralysing doubt, of unfulfilled longing; days in which he craves for annihilation; moments in which he looks forward to a future wherein he will become utterly inert, will cease to act and even to think? And yet, despite all private correspondence, all boudoirs, all scepticism, and all argument, the historical process is something very different from God's feuilleton, being hard, cold, indifferent, logical, and pitiless; it is instinct with forces which clash, with interests which bite, with titanic endeavours which wrestle with one another, with concentrations of will which before the dark background of the historical horizon discharge their energies in the lightning-flashes of action.

No one feels these compulsions of change more keenly than do the leaders among men. They grow in a peculiar atmosphere of coming events, and are allured by the severities of the world much as sluggards are allured by soft cushions. The process is, like every other phenomenon, bipolar. The influence they acquire, and through which nations and classes think and act, is the primal urge to power. These quasi-omnipotent beings, whose will to act cannot be annulled by the terrors of hell, are at the same time the weakest of mortals, as dependent upon necessity as ordinary men in their pleasures of bed and board. The small fancy themselves free, the great are fully aware that they are slaves. The more a man is powerful, the more dependent is he. Persons who are to play a part in history are attracted by seeming impossibilities, for otherwise they would never play the part assigned to them, seeing that only an abundance of obstacles can stimulate the spirit and satisfy it at the same time. Richelieu wants to make monarchical power absolute in a France rent in sunder by religious factions, and (like Bismarck) he founds the modern monarchy behind the back as it were and almost in spite of the wishes of the actual occupant of the throne. The men who achieve great things, thereupon twist and turn in the pincers of necessity, are unable to free themselves, clench their fists, feel as impotent as in the clutches of a nightmare. Those described by the biographers as born under a lucky star are characterized by their realization that it is not what drops into their mouths like a ripe plum which matters, but what they are constrained to do. After Tilsit, Baron vom Stein negotiates for months with Napoleon's representative in Berlin, bargains about war indemnities, insists on the "joint interests of France and Prussia." Lenin concludes the peace of Brest-Litovsk!

Had Napoleon died immediately after Waterloo, had Bismarck died immediately after the coronation of William II, how the biographers would have let their fancies roam, what wonderful concluding chapters would have been penned, what stupendous possibilities would have been worked out at the desks of the professional exaggerators! Yet, in actual fact, after these crucial events both Napoleon and Bismarck were tied hand and foot.

What, then, is the aim of biography?

The impression which an individual leaves behind him may be contemplated by the biographer in an atmosphere which is the outcome of innumerable causes: he can watch it as one in a brown study watches the movement of the wavelets that diffuse themselves on the smooth surface of waters into which a stone has been cast. A great life is the expression of marvellous sagacity, and therefore to tell its story is no less difficult than attractive. For sagacity is chary of words, whereas the biographer wants to fill hundreds of pages. Carl von Clausewitz, the profoundest German thinker of his day, was strongly impressed by this difficulty in describing persons whose actions had the stamp of genius, and he tried to overcome it by a delicacy and a modesty of touch which is not given to every scribe. "The onlooker at all these events," he writes, "seems irresistibly impelled towards pedantry, so that he crawls hither and thither upon the lower levels of cumbrous ideas, and can never meet the great commander upon the plane of swift and comprehensive survey."

Nevertheless, inasmuch as from afar every person and every thing assumes an aspect which is false as well as clear, the biographer has to occupy himself with details if he is to make headway at all. He has to disintegrate the unity of the doer; to discern how bias, weakness, fixed ideas, absurdities, have been consumed in the fires of necessity; and still to keep in view the way in which countless peculiarities have combined to make up the subject of the biography, to note how past and present have joined with ready hand in the sketching of the profile. Much can then be guessed, many accessories can be explained, numerous connexions can be elucidated. But the pen of the biographer, the philosopher, the historian, breaks at the very moment of discovery, when, after infinite toil, it impinges upon the bed-rock of things.

Georges Clemenceau between Action and Nirvana

CLEMENCEAU

"If there is a God," said Pope Urban VIII when Cardinal Richelieu died, "he will certainly have to pay the shot; but if there is no God, he was a fine fellow"

I

A FEW days before the battle of Austerlitz, Baron Henri de Jomini, acting as liaison officer to Marshal Ney, brought Napoleon a report. The young man was anxious that the emperor should profit by this chance meeting, and therefore hastened to give his senior a few pointers concerning the art of war. Bonaparte, amazed at such impudence, listened for a moment or two, and then dismissed the adviser without allowing him time to finish his discourse. Jomini departed sorrowfully, convinced that now everything would go awry.

Shortly before the battle of Königgratz, he wanted to give Moltke the benefit of his wisdom.

The baron bestowed wise counsel on various other military commanders, and lived to be ninety. He had seen the first tirailleurs and the first transport of troops by rail, and he survived to see the last vivandières and the first machine-guns. At the battlefields of almost eighty years he was an onlooker and a diligent chronicler. He tingled with interest as he penned thousands upon thousands of pages.

Men who attain so great an age need a philosophy quite as much as they need a good digestion, for otherwise they are liable to suffer from petrifaction of the heart. Even when they are grumpy, choleric, and dictatorial, they always cultivate an original form of wisdom. An encyclopædic knowledge seems to say to them: "If a saint wishes to reach a goal, he must use the same artful dodges as a footpad." That is why they are not censorious. Or is it simply because, having grown old and weak, they no longer have any teeth to bite with?

They have the aspect of wanderers in time like circumnavigators in space. Their tales have an adventurous ring, like those of mariners who have sailed uncharted seas and have heard the murmuring of fabled springs. Beside their tombs mourn epochs which otherwise exist only for historians and university professors. Time becomes paper. From the standpoint of the present, the past looks like a closed fan, but observation of the course of a human life reopens it. For man, not a fossil, is the measure of all things; and therefore man is the measure of time. In Jomini we see even more than in Clemenceau how the various stages of time differ one from another. The man who had witnessed the battle of Valmy journeyed during the closing decades of his life by train; the man who had watched Napoleon's retreat from Moscow travelled in a brightly lit coupé from Petersburg to Paris.

The railway was a fine invention, not merely because one could travel so fast by rail, but because it offered such infinite possibilities. Even as late as the reign of Louis Philippe, the prime minister had declared in the Chamber that the locomotive engine belonged to the realm of fancy, for the passengers would infallibly become affected by inflammation of the lungs as soon as the train came out of a tunnel. Yet, after all, one could steam along famously, without the least fear of pneumonia! Through the windows of the rolling carriage the travellers looked up at the stars; it seemed to them as if they were moving through open space, and not in the familiar world. They could reach out their hands and grasp the planets. A marvellous optimism enwrapped both heaven and earth.

Anything, now, was possible; every happiness was "demonstrably" ours for the taking. Mankind's new god was no longer invisible, was no longer veiled in the obscurity of mystical intuitions: he could be heard in the whistle of every steam-engine; he turned wheels, provided light, pierced mountains. Reality, the truths of the sciences, would dispel the nebulous vestiges of outworn ideologies and epochs; would build up upon a scientific foundation the positive edifice of the world; would make romanticists, theologians, visionaries, emotionalists, rhapsodists, seem as ludicrous as ghosts seem—to those who do not believe in them.

A whole generation was under the spell of Auguste Comte's positivism.

At the portals of mathematics, astronomy, physics, chemistry, biology, there did indeed still stand mandarins on guard; sentries determined to see to it that the inexhaustible energies of life flowing from the treasure-houses of applied reason should flow only into the private coffers of a thin stratum of property-owners. But the endeavour would be futile. The seeds of happiness would sprout upon the little plots of the millions of poor. Nothing more was needed than the universal sunshine, and the fertilizing dew of a fresh morning of ardent resolve.

The young intellectuals looked through the windows of their schoolrooms and editorial offices, looked forth into this world which was part promise and part already performance. They smiled compassionately if a regiment under the orders of the third Napoleon happened to march by. He was only "Napoléon le petit," the usurper, the contemptible. Émile Zola, aged twenty, and Georges Clemenceau, aged twenty-one, have their newspaper, *Le Travail,* and use it as a vehicle for their enthusiasm. "Courage, courage, my century! Press onward, ever onward!" writes Zola defiantly. Clemenceau acclaims Michelet, being doubly stirred: first of all, by 1793 and Danton and the Convention; and, secondly, by the enthusiasm of this inspired historian of France and the Revolution.

II

At twenty Georges Clemenceau, like most youths of his day, had learned the ABC of optimism in the perishable form of positivism. Ere long, however, he ran his head against the boundary wall of this method, and sustained a painful wound which remained open for the rest of his life. Positivism, planned for the destruction of all religion and all metaphysic, became a penitent sinner, more papal than the pope, and without the Holy Father's living and all-embracing tradition.

Positivism lost its soul in the inkpot of its learned champions.

Faith in the mechanical development of happiness, thanks to the advance of physical science, was shattered upon economic reality. It seemed as if the most noteworthy product of the blast-furnaces of industry was unexampled poverty. The progress of manufacturing technique made the rich richer and the poor poorer. A whole generation was spent in controversy in face of the perspectives of the economic future; in disputes concerning days to come, concerning hypotheses, prophecies, and things lying beyond the range of proof. Some (the socialists of the *Communist Manifesto*) believed that, out of the tears of those who then suffered, the machine would make white pearls of happiness. Others were sceptical, shunned prophecy, cherished hopes that were independent of any school of thought.

Clemenceau's formative years were spent amid these ideologies, discussions, traditions, in the shadow of the economic revolutions and the political events of the Second Empire and the opening years of the Third Republic. From the outer world, impressions dripped through his brain as through a filter, slowly forming his "philosophy," his "specific gravity," that which at one and the same time gave him stability and set him in motion. He was a man of movement who wanted to form things, to act upon them; and yet thought was continually putting a spoke in his wheel, so that he oscillated unceasingly betwixt action and nirvana. By day, he was courageous, enthusiastic, full of new ideas, a leader in debate, unwearied in attack, always ready to take up his pen, stirred by every political happening, stimulated by every item of political information; every newspaper article and every speech in parliament was of moment to him. When night came, he wondered why his interest had been so strongly aroused, felt that his urge to action had been ridiculous, and (like a man in a nightmare) asked himself wonderingly: "What has all this to do with me?"

"Oar succeeds oar," writes Clemenceau, "in the galley of life, and the waves subside before they come."

He paints in gloomy colours, and bewails this world of ours with its pasteboard gods; claps his hands over his ears to shut out the words of the multitudinous oracles; watches death accompanying every breath, and the weak brother destroying a brother yet weaker than himself; sees a colosseum of transgression; perceives that every one is so profoundly impressed by the importance of his own rights that the rights of others are forgotten; notes that strivings towards goodness result only in carnage; hears the murmurs of the ill-treated and their muttered threats of reprisal; thinks of all the infatuated fools in whose eyes the greatest of crimes is to confute their babbled ideologies.

With this bitterness in his soul, faced by this blank nullity into which past and present and future resolve themselves, he is in danger of perishing.

He shivers, as if exposed stark naked to the wintry blast. Theology has, after all, justified its existence throughout fifteen centuries—as a fire that kept people warm, no matter the variety of scholasticism with which its flames were fanned.

Clemenceau fights for his life, talks eloquently to convince himself, glosses over with his will those primal enigmata of existence which always plague him. From pessimism he is saved by the instinctive determination, the stalwart resolve, the eager desire, to escape from the labyrinth which stretches between yes and no. Slamming the door of speculation behind him, he rushes furiously forth into the open.

"What are we seeking in this world?" he asks. "How to make the best use of a fleeting existence! Where can we find the life we want? In a balance of our energies! These energies signify a weighing of activity. . . . Is it not a physiological disorder to consume one's strength in lamentations concerning the miseries of existence, and by a mode of sensibility to destroy the most real of delights, that of being and acting? The healthy man . . . devotes all his energies to the struggle

. . . takes the destinies of the earth into his hands."

Energy wells up out of the depths of pessimism, just as profound sleep bestows a wonderful freshness.

Clemenceau looks for a symbol with which to celebrate the cure of his melancholy, and finds it in the great god Pan (*Le grand Pan,* Paris, 1896).

At eventide, when all is quiet as a mountain tarn, he and Pan listen to the melancholy of the cosmos. Pan, Hermes' son, is a meditative creature. He roams through the forests, becomes the patron of bee-keeping, ogles nymphs like any mortal, annoys his brethren in Olympus, plays lilts upon the syrinx, dances merrily—but then, of a sudden, becomes affected with the weaknesses of perishable beings. He flees into solitude, sits on a stone beside the rivulet, and puzzles over problems concerning the philosophy of history. His sadness is not personal, for he remains one of the immortals; it is disinterested melancholy because the glittering life of mankind is doomed to destruction. He hears plaints from remote ages; receives messages from Athens, Rome, Carthage, Palmyra, and Persepolis. In the morning, before the playful fit seizes him, he is a Hegelian; finds consolation in the rationale of change; opines that from out the debris of excellence the spirit emerges, not merely rejuvenated, but exalted and transfigured. In the vast realm of nothingness, he discovers a gleam of consolation—the idea, which lifts itself above the earth, and is not fettered to ephemeral triumphs.

Clemenceau's writing is invariably political. His muse needs the theatre of great events. After holding sway for a while, hating, commanding—when he himself or others have overthrown his cabinet, and when he has been on some small globe-trotting excursion, has with all due care hunted tigers and elephants, and after the peace of the jungle has been disturbed by a ministerial crisis in the Palais Bourbon—he takes up his pen. Writing is for him a symbol commemorating a battle. At his writing-desk he seeks to widen the landscape of his feelings and wishes. After a quarter of a century his visionary imago is no longer Pan but Demosthenes. In *Demosthène* (Paris, 1926), he celebrates and idealizes himself.

Clemenceau looks for defeatists in Athens, during the war of the Greeks against Philip of Macedon; he hunts through the pages of history for persons infirm of will, for traitors who have been bribed by the enemy. Under his own rule, his own courts martial (working behind the veil of ice-bound silence which always screens the warlords' palaces of justice) have sentenced four thousand Frenchmen. That is why he institutes a search for courts martial in the neighbourhood of the Acropolis, beside the Parthenon, on Mount Hymettus. Clemenceau loves Demosthenes for his strenuous efforts, which are frustrated by the inertia of his weak coadjutors. In *Demosthène* he shows how democracy carries on war, and the perils to which it is exposed.

The Athenians assemble on the Pnyx, little men freed for a few hours from the burden of toil or idleness. The little man is unsure of himself; is a prey to allurements, catchwords, specious promises. The hours pass, and the moment for decision is at hand. Then Demosthenes mounts the rostrum. He lets himself go; his hearers are swayed by his words; he ventures the leap, and the Hellenes follow him. The cadences of oratory disperse into the blue heavens, and the Athenians depart to their homes. Now has come the time for disciplined activity, for a wrestle with details, for the quiet and inconspicuous labour of unknown men. But these are lacking. In Demosthenes, says Clemenceau, in this pale seeker of fugitive truths, we can discern the man who wills something, leads something, shapes something. Such, too, is Clemenceau himself during the two years in which he is war-time dictator of France. He, who has championed will and individuality, seeks the altars of Hellenic civilization, and—at eighty—constructs, no longer a government, but a world-embracing programme of human organization. He is bold in his individualism. If all men were like me, if there were fifteen hundred million Clemenceaus in the world, then it would be the best of all possible worlds. As things are, however, the man of eighty-five is silent about the days to come; he is not fond of using the future tense. He sees only victories and defeats; projects the individual's struggle for existence upon the cosmos; believes that likewise in the universe at large the stronger force will overpower the weaker; and finds consolation for the vanquished. If one who is beaten refuses to accept defeat, then he can renew the struggle—perhaps for weal, perhaps for woe.

III

In the days of the Second Empire, the republican opposition unites extensive strata of the population, but does not organize them into an effective political party. It is no more than a light by which night-flying insects are irresistibly attracted.

The opposition was a current of feeling along which boats freighted with various interests were borne: the interests of the blouse-wearers (as the proletarians had been termed since, in 1848, they had begun to play a part in European politics); those of the Latin Quarter; those of the liberal professions; those of the commercial classes; those of the more thoughtful of the philistines; and those of the impoverished, among whom the Jacobin tradition persisted in the depths, like the death-watch beetle in wood.

It resembled grace before meat, this republicanism of the sixties; it was a cheerful expectation of satiety in the near future, after a long fast.

"How ridiculously easy," writes Clemenceau, "to be a republican under Napoleon III! One had only to talk or to write. But as soon as the Republic had been proclaimed, the time had come for action."

Yet the actions were very different from those the erstwhile republicans had expected.

The Republic was set up by monarchists, and it was born under the sign of two catastrophes—Sedan and the Commune.

Stumblingly, maladroitly, in blood-drenched and inflammatory articles and manifestoes and in childishly simple practice, the Commune showed that there was a social question; it was the infancy of the continental European revolutionary working-class movement, born amid grievous labour pains from out the womb of Paris. By its extravagances, the Commune saved the Republic. Maybe in half a century from now, historians will declare that the Spartacist rising of 1919, directed against the Republic, helped the German Republic to become viable.

From fear of the extremists' rebellion, moderates supported the Republic, fought the Commune in the name of the Republic, and thus ensured that the other towns of France should have no sympathy with the rising in Paris. But the Republic—in itself—was a mere abstraction, was only a framework within which rival interest could effect accommodation.

Clemenceau's strength lay in this, that he wanted such an accommodation to be carried to the farthest limit. He never had any thought of coming to rest somewhere; always it was his opinion that the aim of politics was to promote action in the crude form, not to foster dreams of harmony. He left to timid onlookers the complaint that political life was "too rough." "A condition of repose," he wrote, "is not one for free peoples." When, after the downfall of the Commune, the leaders of the extreme Left had been transported to New Caledonia or placed under lock and key for ten years and more, he was able to become spokesman of the extremists, and could turn them to account within the framework of the republican party as "excitateurs d'énergie réformatrice." He did not break with them until political life had resumed a normal course, until the various schools and conventicles of socialism had thrown up magnates of their own. Joining forces with the Left, fighting a common cause with the Left, he had carried on his great struggle on behalf of the modern bourgeois republic, his struggle to bequeath a lasting legacy. This was an aim on which, pessimist though he was, he could concentrate his forces and by means of which he could allow the current of his energies to play round something hostile, as a stream purls round an islet. Here is room for the power of personality to operate within the extant historical framework; here politics becomes a fine art; here it has all the lure of one of Shakespeare's plays, one of Michelangelo's statues; here Clemenceau becomes as mulish as a Jacobin, reminding us of Danton; here we see the peasant from Vendée; here he is as intransigent as Public Prosecutor Fouquier-Tinville; here is the domain of that inflexibility which alone can produce greatness; here no compromise can creep in—not because compromise is in itself undesirable, but because it will hinder political education, and will at this particular moment be unpractical and obstructive. "Our first republican duty," he tells us, "is to resist the formation of coalitions, which weaken ideas and lead to confusion." Opposition gives impetus to his spirit, and he himself gives impetus to his opponents. He is not bound by charters and is not fettered to a bureaucracy. His thoughts are as unambiguous as Napoleon's strategy. Like Bonaparte he works through the instrumentality of the masses he despises, and like Bonaparte he always strikes at the enemy's centre. In his opposition Clemenceau is revolutionary, and is not confined by the trammels of orthodoxy. The essence of his rebellion is his pitiless clarity, which enables him to make great things out of trifles, and to transform into a national drama a miscarriage of justice like the Dreyfus affair. After he has won a campaign he will not treat with the vanquished, and that is why he is able to carry out his whole programme for the separation of Church and State. Clemenceau makes possible the most radical ministries that have ever guided the destinies of the Third Republic: those of Waldeck-Rousseau, Millerand, and Combes. Urging on the government, he writes: "We must know what we want. When we want a thing, we must have the courage to say so; and when we talk, we must be bold enough to act."

The question of property was what separated this nineteenth-century philosopher from the extreme Left. In him any thought of an economic collectivism always called up a picture of a monotonous, grey orphan asylum. When he first became premier, there arose a deafening clamour concerning his alleged treason. But Clemenceau was not afraid to rule. Just as formerly he had tyrannized over ministries, so now he tyrannized over the opposition. "To rule," he says, "means to stretch the springs of power to the uttermost—short of breaking them. Being ruled means to wait patiently for the day of a theatrical rebellion of some sort."

Wrapped in his exclusiveness as if it had been a mantle, enamoured of his own uncompromising formularies, he irritated the opposition more than he could harm it. He did not want a dictatorship, nor could he have got it had he wanted it. All the same, in this democrat, in this veteran parliamentarian, there was a good deal of the dictator. What restrained him from the attempt to make himself dictator was the sportive element in his composition. It was in improvisation, above all, that he showed his genius; and it was his ambition, above all, to be the man of great crises. In his struggle with the Left he would gladly have conjured up a crisis, although socialism was not a danger, and the socialists were rather surprised to be taken so seriously. To the general astonishment, he was already being spoken of as the "saviour of society."

"Clemenceau," wrote the socialist Charles Rappoport at this time (1910), "has for nearly half a century been a champion of the democratic cause. Within three years he has succeeded in demolishing his own life-work. As ruling statesman he has done the very reverse of what with fiery eloquence and with a caustic pen he had advocated as a member of the opposition."

This way of looking at the matter is orthodox and at the same time unsound. In political life a man is not a traitor unless he betrays some one in particular, and he is not a backslider unless he backslides from a position occupied by some specific person or persons.

Clemenceau's new attitude is merely the expression of economic changes, merely a sign of the consolidation of the Republic. That new attitude manifested itself in two ways, which were ostensibly opposed: first, in a vigorous struggle against the monarchical elements; and, secondly, in the satisfaction of the largest possible number of interests in the widest possible stratum of property owners. Those who were being fought in the political field were being simultaneously gratified in the economic field. The Third Republic was becoming the republic of "persons of independent income" and a republic able to export capital. The property owners of all grades were being given excellent reasons for supporting the republican form of government. To provide good business opportunities for its citizens had become a matter of pride to the Republic. The reductions of taxation on the land amounted after two decades to twenty-five million francs. The monarchical landowner had been robbed of his king, but in return his beeves and muttons and corn had been safeguarded against foreign competition. The funds rose to a figure unknown in the days of the Second Empire. The petty bourgeoisie, the main source of the power which backed Clemenceau's radical policy, was identifying itself ever more heartily with the extant form of government. To the members of this class, talk about the future seemed mere phrasemaking. But social legislation remained an untilled field. All direct taxes were abolished, and all indirect taxes issued from monopolies. Like his teachers, the encyclopædists, Clemenceau was little concerned to think in economic terms. As supreme warlord, as the minister who makes the peace, as pamphleteer and essayist and playwright, he invariably contemplates the same side of the problems he has to solve, looks always at ponderables, never sees the idea being born out of matter in motion, has an eye only for fully finished thoughts. The France of royal splendours, the eagles of Napoleon I, the battlefield of

Sedan, the Third Republic, the land of the peace of Versailles—are for him identical and unvarying magnitudes.

IV

Carl von Clausewitz, the most original and comprehensive political thinker since Machiavelli, writes: "We must not seek the contrasts between nations in their maxims, but in the totality of their mental and material interrelationships." In his foreign policy, however, Clemenceau was guided by maxims. There, during the later years of his life, he abandoned his scepticism, his relativism; there he saw clouds, and through the clouds he glimpsed millions of enemy bayonets.

"We shall not let ourselves be butchered"—this was his second word.

Bismarck, the absolute antithesis of Clemenceau in general outlook, had a much less constricted range in matters of foreign policy, and contemplated wider horizons.

Neither of them, however, had caught sight of the new and fundamental economic ties, or of the resulting changes in the mechanism of high policy. They never dreamed that Britain, the United States, France, and Germany, would become the bankers of the world, or that, among these great providers of money, France would in due time occupy a secondary position.

After 1870, Clemenceau raised a clamour about Alsace-Lorraine. But even in this matter there persisted the connexion between foreign policy and home affairs. He was not invariably the mouthpiece of hatred. Being allied to the Left, he could not think of prompt vengeance. He did nothing to interfere with the trends favouring amicable relations with the German Empire. This drawing together of France and Germany was to weave the great mantle of European confidence, beneath which foreign policy could be conducted and alliances could be entered into. Everything else might be left to the morrow. On the base of the Gambetta monument is chiselled the legend: "No one can forbid us the future."

Bismarck wanted (not from dread of France, but in the hope of promoting a Franco-German alliance) to turn the eyes of the Third Republic away from Alsace-Lorraine and to direct her gaze towards the colonies.

Clemenceau did his utmost to resist colonial expansion. Now, whatever one can say of Clemenceau, however harsh the judgments some may be inclined to pass on him, no one can accuse him of hiding his thoughts. On the contrary, he trumpeted his aims; he was too proud, too stubborn, too self-confident, too self-satisfied, to lie. (He left this necessary task to the man who always succeeded him in office, to Aristide Briand, the statesman wont to describe politics as "an affair of the nimble touch.") With Clemenceau, who was a radical democrat, to declaim against colonial expansion was a matter of principle.

"Our business," he said, speaking in the Chamber as a simple deputy, "is not to create an empire in Indo-China, but to stabilize the Republic in France. . . . The victories of mankind mean more to us than the victories of the generals. We need peace that we may crown democracy, that we may perfect it both in great matters and in small."

Not until powerful monopolies came into existence behind the backs of the ostensibly omnipotent foreign ministers and prime ministers; not until the new imperialism, its appetite whetted by previous snacks, reopened its hungry maw; not until the manger in the world-market was proving too narrow for all the beasts that wanted to feed there, when capital was being exported instead of commodities, when the banks were gaining preponderant power, and when nationalism was acquiring entirely new foundations—not until then did Clemenceau become a chauvinist in foreign affairs and "saviour of society" at home.

But then he attacked the Berlin government as savagely as he had of old attacked Ferry or the pope. During the Moroccan crisis, Clemenceau as premier spoke with an undiplomatic frankness which is not usually characteristic of politicians unless war is about to be declared. "The powerful government on the other side of the Vosges is showing its fists in the way so beloved by the frequenters of every German beerhouse. . . . But we Frenchmen have still something to say, something to wish for, something to finish."

When, a few years later, war breaks out, none of the measures adopted are vigorous enough for him, and he who, when he becomes premier again, will inexorably demand a truce of parties, will pitilessly declare that there is no choice between shouting "Hurrah for the war" and being shot at dawn, now attacks the government in the language of an insurgent.

Old though he is, hatred keeps him alive, and in the hour of his country's greatest peril he is once more its ruler.

His conduct of the war is a marvellous chapter of political strategy, and still awaits adequate record in the history that will one day be written concerning the last two years before Versailles.

The peace is regarded by Clemenceau as an opportunity for personal vengeance. He would like to make it as trenchant, as contumelious, as polemic, as caustic, as if he were dictating a leading article. He wants to embody all his hatred in it. That is why on every page of the treaty we find expression of the man's simple philosophy, a philosophy he never conceals: Væ victis!

V

Clemenceau the pessimist, Clemenceau the scorner, Clemenceau the man who, though weary of life, does not wish to die, has a predecessor in the Bible—Solomon the Preacher. Ecclesiastes builds houses, plants vineyards, makes pools of water to water therewith groves and orchards, and exclaims bitterly at the end: "I have seen all the works that are done under the sun; and, behold, all is vanity and vexation of spirit, and the day of death is better than the day of birth."

Dogma and Dialectic in Lenin

LENIN

PHILOSOPHY is not parched and care-worn, and does not dream in quiet camps; it is the chalice of living reality, and is actively engaged upon the unending search for an explanation of all phenomena. From the outset, thought has swung to and fro between "idealism" and "realism," and, since the dawn of written history, between "idealism" and "materialism." The confines of these rival possibilities form philosophy's spacious prison-house. It seems likely that both methods of contemplation are but equally probable hypotheses. Despite their perennial warfare, the two systems borrow arguments each from the other, each robbing the other of the most graceful metaphors and the aptest quotations. The alternative ways of interpreting experience can be combined as variously as you please, like the twenty-six letters of the alphabet. In the interminable quarrels of the philosophers (their trade lives, like other trades, by the disputes of those who practise it), the orthodox prophets of idealism and materialism save their fearfully and wonderfully made systems by the simple phrase "in the end."

The idealist says to the materialist: "Tell me, worthy colleague, how you account for the fact that in the virgin forests of North America the pioneer colonists developed more of the capitalist spirit than the citizens of Catholic Venice developed during the centuries wherein that city lived by maritime commerce. According to your theory, economic conditions determine men's thoughts. If that be so, we ought to find in these poor emigrants the mentality of naked savages, and yet we see them thinking and acting in fashions far more modern than those of old Europe."

"Sir," rejoins the materialist, "you are looking only at the end of the contradiction, and therefore naturally fail to see its beginning. The Calvinist was an emigrant from capitalist England. Not merely did he manufacture shoes, or what not, before leaving the homeland, but, furthermore, he took with him across the Atlantic the mentality which issued from the industrial revolution. The new trademark of what you are pleased to call his soul is more lasting than boots from Manchester, for it creates the transformed mental environment in which his children and grandchildren will grow up. In the end, therefore, materialism alone proves right."

"This is a singular argument of yours," counters the idealist. "Tell me why those particular men emigrated: tell me why it is that there are exceptions to your law of materialist determination, why some of those who have been exposed to the same influences are nevertheless refractory to the spirit of rationalist economics. You, being a rigid materialist, can hardly appeal to Calvin's doctrine of predestination and election. Ethos is, after all, stronger than the forest primeval, for, in the end, thought creates being, the idea fashions the whole outer life."

Notwithstanding the apparent sterility of myriads of such discussions, philosophy and the struggles among the conflicting orthodoxies yield abundant fruit. By modifying the soft, the gentle, the delicate, the incalculable in man, by altering man's consciousness, by giving him a new longing, philosophy simultaneously changes the hard and fixed walls of reality. Through the analysis of the subjective, of opinions, through this study of the abstract in man, through the manner in which reality is reflected in his brain, through the sense of the ego and the tu, through all the philosophies, through these successive waves of consciousness—the past is made visible no less than by the ruins of ancient cities, and thus does the history of philosophy reveal itself to be universal history.

Even Lenin, who with proselytizing zeal speaks of philosophical idealism as a manifestation of priestcraft, and as a doctrine whose aim it is "to keep the oppressed classes in subjection by inculcating a belief in the divine right of the oppressors," writes regarding this same doctrine: "It is indubitably a sterile blossom, but it is a sterile blossom which grows out of the stem of the living, fruitful, true, mighty, omnipotent, objective tree of absolute human knowledge."

In idealist philosophy, which believes that the free and independent light of the spirit can change social diseases into health and transform social death into life, Lenin discerns two things: first, the theoretical framework of a practical deception, the delusive magic of hostile powers; and, secondly, the conceptual necessities of a particular stratum occupying a particular class-position during a particular epoch. He craves to discover the reason why these ideas, which he terms "reactionary," come into being. Even a fundamentally false idea must spring from some sort of reality. Perhaps all that is thought is "rational," as well as all that exists. But the underlying grounds for the particular tenets of idealist philosophy are sought by him, not in the glories of the past, not in literary tradition (maybe the cultured man in Lenin would in this lengthy pilgrimage of thought have succumbed to the lure of so many parables), but in that which for him is the universal source—the movement of matter which he, in common with Marx, terms dialectic.

"The final purpose of my book," writes Marx in the preface to *Capital,* "is to reveal the economic law of motion in modern society."

The exchange of commodities makes the heart of the bourgeois nation beat a millionfold, unintermittently, with the rhythm of an all-embracing process. What could be simpler, what more "natural," than to sell the product of its labour in the market? Yet this most familiar of occurrences hides within itself all the contradictions of society, from individual tragedies to wars and revolutions and conquests; it determines all statistics, all poverty, all riches; it makes the torch of labour flare and flicker, and spreads the bait which attracts capitalist enterprise; it is the great fair of life, and affects every human destiny. However tangled the various interests may seem, nothing happens arbitrarily; the law of dialectic speaks through all contradictions; and the dialectic of the commodity, which is the atom of society, repeats itself a thousandfold in all subsequent political and social intercourse.

But in due time, think those who have to wait outside the doors of a world they are forbidden to enter, this curse will be lifted and victory will come. The dialectic movement will reverse the present state of affairs. It cannot fail to do so, for it holds sway everywhere, not only in the domain of commodities, but also in our thought process, in chemistry, in physics, in biology. Everything is, in the last resort, transformed into its opposite, and then repeats itself upon a new, a "higher" plane.

This dialectic, comparable to the god of the pantheists, to the love of St. Francis, who because of his "pietà" was able to converse freely with all the animals, has innumerable shades—shades that are as numberless as ordinary shadows.

"Here [in economics] just as in the natural sciences, we find confirmation of the law discovered by Hegel in his *Logic,* that, at a certain point, what have been purely quantitative changes become qualitative," writes Karl Marx. A very simple instance of this is the formation of ozone out of oxygen. The oxygen molecule consists of two atoms; but if an electric spark be passed through a receiver filled with the gas, some of these molecules are dissociated, and the freed atoms attach themselves to other oxygen molecules, so that a gas consisting of molecules containing three atoms each is produced. This is ozone, qualitatively different from oxygen, although there has been no change in the fundamental substance out of which it is made up.

The movement of thought occurs in accordance with the same principle of change. "In epistemology," writes Lenin, "no less than in other branches of knowledge, we must think dialectically, this meaning that we must not regard our knowledge as something finished and unalterable, but must endeavour to ascertain how knowledge arises out of ignorance, how incomplete and inexact knowledge becomes completer and more precise knowledge."

This assumed law of motion (not in itself new, but the joint possession of a socialist generation comprising a few thinkers and millions of unreflective adherents) was for Lenin the source of mental elasticity and liveliness. The fact that, among the millions who espoused the doctrine, he alone could make of it an instrument of research, shows that what really counts is not a philosophy but the man who applies it. The subjective decides! What immediately faces the thinker is the past as a heap of ruins, and the present as a chaos of things; only interpretation and method can introduce order into this confusion. Without interpretation, the present and the past are but dead nonentity. Even a dogma is more useful than no philosophy at all. Just as the feet need the protection of shoe-leather, for otherwise the tender soles would be chafed and wounded by the roughnesses of the ground, so our reason needs a theory to save itself from being driven into melancholia by the harshness of reality. The Marxian dialectic is in its essence the extremity of relativism. With a thousand drops of thought it scatters all finality, with the hammer of concepts it breaks the absolute into fragments; and the very man who had the most uncompromising grasp of this doctrine was animated by a rigid fixity and cocksureness in relation alike to himself and to the outer world. "Any one," writes Lenin, "who denies a single one of these fundamental principles moves away from objective truth and throws himself into the arms of the bourgeois reaction."

Socialism in its entirety was for him the dialectic method in all its shades and consequences. One who renounced any part of socialist theory was necessarily renouncing a part of socialist practice; and human practice, in epistemology no less than elsewhere, was for Lenin a proof of the soundness of theory.

These notions, this sense of certainty dictated to him by his will rather than by his philosophy, made Lenin (who combined Richelieu's craving for power with Campanella's fanaticism) perfectly self-confident at all times and in all places, and invariably convinced that he had a full and accurate knowledge of reality. For this reason external conditions were to him of trifling importance, no matter whether he was awaiting the arrival of letters in his Siberian exile, or writing books in a Munich garret, or seated as chairman of his political quartette at one of the round marble-topped tables in a Genevese coffee-house. The essential thing was that he had attained to "the objective truth of absolute human knowledge." Against the ideal treasure of this subject of his, the tsar was as impotent as was the Holy Synod of the Orthodox Church. Of what account is the tsar of all the Russias when dialectic confutes him? He is merely a tyranny compounded of various forces, and a tyranny which will soon be transformed into its opposite. Lenin was only vulnerable within the realm of his own monarchy, in the domain of philosophy. But there—when some sworn devotee of Marxism, some votary of socialism, fellow-member of the conventicle, or co-editor of the Party organ, ventured to maintain that there was no absolute truth, that nothing more could be predicated of truth than that it was "an organized form of human experience," that everything was open to question, that even the doctrine of "cause and effect" was no more than an unproved assumption inasmuch as in science the notion of "causation" had been replaced by that of "release" and the idea of "necessity" by that of "unambiguity"—why then the fat was in the fire. Then, and only then, did Lenin boil over with rage, utter curses loud and deep, and pen a lengthy treatise, *Materialism and Empirio-Criticism, Critical Notes concerning a Reactionary Philosophy.*

Though he is no simplist, though he does not forget the existence of modifying circumstances—economic, historical, national, and geographical—for him the problem of the revolution is primarily epistemological.

The brilliant Rivarol, a metaphysician in the romantic (because unpaid) service of Louis XVI, uttered warnings against philosophers, every one of whom was a potential Jacobin. The books of the encyclopædists seemed to him branded with the mark of Cain; they were all under the shadow of the guillotine and had been bound in human skins. A great social change is always heralded by a struggle between rival ideologies, even though the dispute may seem to have no logical connexion with the imminent transformation. The "ideologies" show, as it were, the uneasiness of animals that sense a coming storm. In Russia, dissatisfaction was always voiced in accordance with the very latest theories. "Le dernier cri" would take the form of nitroglycerine for the making of bombs, that of free love, vegetarianism, neo-Kantianism, neo-Hegelianism, Machism, or what you will. The malcontents, however, did not themselves produce a single new idea, or leave behind them even one book of lasting value. In a hotel room some of the brethren would be vociferating about the best way of wrecking trains; while others would be arguing with no less heat about the nature of matter and the universe (neither of which, unfortunately, could be shattered by high explosives). Schemes for revolution and for the salvation of the country were as innumerable as the troubles of Asiatic misrule. In this medley of impotence, warring opinions, neurasthenia, plagiarism, steadfastness, self-sacrifice, and bounce, Lenin exerted an educational and attractive influence, was like a strict judge who is immune to moods and anxieties. He was at one and the same time a tranquil scientist and a clamorous monk volleying curses. When he decided to write a book on philosophy, it was because he felt that his closest friends were tainted by a damnable heresy. With the same tenacity that he had shown two years earlier during street-fights in Russia, he sat in the British Museum Reading Room and then in the French Bibliothèque Nationale making extracts from Hume, Kant, Hegel, and Mach. Armed with these quotations, he shouted down all opposition among the comrades, declaring that any one who dissented was a traitor. But the doubts of those who differed from him were concerned, not with the superexcellence of the revolution, but with the methods and problems of cognition. "Our empirio-critics," he wrote to Gorki, "are positively wallowing in the mire. . . . They mix up materialism and Kantianism in the most preposterous way. . . . They preach a variety of agnosticism and idealism . . . advocate 'religious atheism' and the 'deification of the highest human potentialities.' . . . They are agnostics or metaphysicians who draw from the polluted source of some kind of French positivism. May the devil fly away with them and their symbolical epistemology! Really, they are the limit!"

For the discussions in the bolshevik groups, Lenin formulates ten commandments, asks ten questions, states ten conditions, which are to be decisive as to a comrade's trustworthiness in the matter of dialectic. Any one who is unable to accept them without demur must be in league with the archfiend. Here are four of the articles in this ukase: (1) Does the referendary acknowledge that the philosophy of Marxism is dialectical materialism? (2) Does the referendary accept Engels' basic division of philosophical systems into materialism and idealism, and Engels' description of Hume's trend as . . . vacillating? . . . (7) Does the referendary agree that the ideas of causality, necessity, invariable sequence, etc., are but the reflexions of natural laws . . . in men's minds? Or does he hold that Engels was wrong in asserting this? . . . (8) Does the referendary know that Mach declared his agreement with Schuppe, the head of the immanentist school . . . though Schuppe was a defender of clericalism and an outspoken reactionary in philosophy?"

The metropolitan of the Greek-Orthodox Church, officiating in Moscow, decked out in full canonicals, posturing before the altar in the light of the wax candles, was more tolerant than Lenin —just as the pope had a broader outlook than Martin Luther upon things temporal.

An unbending attitude towards the outer world, the hoisting of a fixed idea as a banner behind which to march, are some of the elements of a reformer's power. In the flux of events dogma comes into being, and the events themselves give birth to—history.

Authorities which have a long past behind them, authorities maintaining a traditional civilized order, can afford to treat offenders leniently, and can even tolerate heresy.

But a heresy which aims at world conquest and is surrounded by foes cannot tolerate internal dissent, for it lives only by the idea. Thought is its armed power, and to question that thought is treason. The leader of an innovation may be tormented by doubt, may be stirred by pleasure or pain in face of passing phenomena, and may none the less show himself rigid and bigoted in his attitude towards his followers. He is learning, is watching, is weighing pros and cons; but he insists on unconditional obedience, propounds axioms which his underlings must accept without question. When, in the stuffy atmosphere of the room where they assemble, the bolsheviks become depressed, when they weary, if not of the doctrine, at least of its never-ending reiteration, Lenin abuses them as blockheads or traitors. As a thinker he was always willing to make allowances; he was prone to institute comparisons. Trained in the school of German philosophy, he was ready (despite the strength of his convictions) to emphasize the peculiarities in each individual happening, to stress the interconnexions between ideas and the special practical needs of an epoch. Each thing has its own dialectic. This way of thinking does not promote narrowness; it expands, complicates, and illuminates the world.

What especially attracted him in Hegel was the breadth of the Berlin professor's all-embracing concepts—although what Hegel termed "world spirit" was rechristened by Lenin "world matter." Every clear conceptual possibility was according to Lenin realizable in the actual world. That was why, in the flux of events, he could advocate practical solutions which implied a flat denial of extant realities, and yet were not utopias. Change the imperialist war into a civil war! Replace the tsarist dictatorship by the dictatorship of the bolshevist minority! The complete annihilation of the old army is the first prerequisite of the new war! To save the integrity of Russia, the peoples under the heel of tsarism must disrupt the unity of the extant Russian State! These slogans, proclaimed by Lenin amid titanic occurrences and achievements, might have been termed by Hegel "categories of change."

In Cardinal Richelieu's *Testament* we read: "There are none more dangerous than those who want to rule kingdoms in accordance with the maxims they derive from the books they read . . . for the past has no bearing on the present, and the constitution of times, places, and persons is always changing."

Lenin, though legend presents him as continually bending over the socialist Koran, invariably acted on this principle. From epistemology he learned, not only that things exist independently of our consciousness, independently of our perception of them, but also that actual and extant political relationships determine human practice. That was why his famous watchwords were no more than the outcome of necessity and were never the expression of generalized ideals. We can discover in him (as in every statesman of decisive importance) a thousand "contradictions." During the revolution of 1905, he declared a democratic republic based upon universal suffrage to be the supreme goal worth fighting for. Twelve years later, the refugee who had made his way back to Russia in a sealed train condemned this very programme because in the universal social catastrophe no fruitful activity was possible without a more ambitious aim, because the fiercely selfish energies which were fighting to the death one against another would not have been satisfied by the simple demand for a democratic republic, and because this once proud formula had now become an empty phrase.

He contrasted with the ordinary theoretician in that he kept his head when suddenly confronted by new and unexpected facts. It was the invariable wish of this dialectician to have in his pocket a contract with reality, and he therefore adapted himself plastically to all vicissitudes.

No other shaper of events was so free from obstinacy nor was any so little surprised at his own victory, at the sudden leap from powerlessness to power. All that had happened was that dialectic had triumphed! The cognitio-critical philosophy had occupied the Kremlin and had struck terror into the powers of the world. But whether living in cheap lodgings as a refugee or quartered in the palaces of the Romanoffs, Lenin looked upon himself as no more than the thinking reality in which objective truth was being accurately reflected—and the test of this accuracy, writes Lenin, is practice.

Shortly before his death, when at the summit of power he was, like a snow-capped peak, growing ever more lonely, when the forces which had made him a ruler were failing, when his health was impaired, when his energies had been sapped, and when within his own party the struggle among those who aspired to the succession had already begun to rage, the sick man wanted to found a Society of Materialist Friends of the Hegelian Dialectic and "to organize the systematic study (starting from the materialist standpoint) of Hegel's dialectic." But in this great edifice of established dogma, the architect himself was a prey to alarms. Lenin himself trembled in this cathedral of his system, wherein before the high altar the worshippers were forced to genuflect, and wherein priests inspired by mutual hate were craftily, suspiciously, and mockingly struggling one with another for front places. He had tried to limber the rigid concepts by setting them in motion, only to find that his own dogma had arrested the movement of his own dialectic; he saw that darkness was spreading; and he felt that even the supremest triumph is but a symbol of impotence. Stalin, on whom his mantle was to fall, had conquered him even before his eyes were closed. From his sick-bed he issued exhortations and gave imploring counsels—which were not made public. "The members of the secretariat," writes Trotsky, "were especially stiffnecked in their opposition. At length . . . Kubisheff . . . proposed that, in view of Lenin's urgent demand for publication, and for a sight of his words in cold print, there should be set up a number of *Pravda* of which only one copy should be struck off for the dying chief's special benefit."

His political testament, a solemn warning to all those who regarded themselves as destined to enter into his inheritance, was hidden away out of sight in the most secret of treasure chambers. Just as dying tsars had been resolutely strangled by men who had words of love and loyalty on their lips, so did the favoured incumbents of the new power stifle Lenin's last thoughts. Those who made the deepest reverences were waiting most impatiently for dominion, and a hideous farce was played round the dying man's couch.

The heirs believed they could take over, not only the huge realm of Soviet Russia, but also the dialectic which bore the imprint of the dead titan's spirit. In proof they pointed to the two-and-twenty volumes of his writings, as if a virtuoso's violin could replace the vanished musician. At the funeral, Asia and the East were victorious over the spirit of free philosophy. For the masses of this people, ten years of atheism and rebellion had been too long. The repressed religious sentiments could now find an outlet in veneration. Worshippers, assembled amid the snows in the Red Square, could weep for a while until tears were stilled in the dumb ecstasy of devotion.

In ancient Greece to have no sense of moderation was regarded as a sign of barbarism, as unworthy of a Hellene. That was why in Sparta, although divine honours were accorded to the spirit of Lycurgus, the mortal remains, the dead man's ashes, were cast into the sea. They wanted no relics of him whom they had so greatly esteemed. The Greeks did not know the art of embalming, which had been a specialty of the Egyptians. The secret of this "dry cremation" vanished with the Pharaohs, and no moderns deplore its loss more bitterly than does the Soviet government. Vainly were men of science summoned to Moscow in the hope that they would be able to save Lenin's badly mummified body from further decay. Alas, modern science knew no remedy, and the mouldering of the poor corpse continues, despite the glass case in the splendid mausoleum. But Lenin himself was not responsible for this revival of the worship of bones. A dead man can no more protect his body than his teaching. Both are at the mercy of his disciples.

Marshal Foch's Ideas and the Republic of Civilians

FOCH

NELSON looked for the French fleet in the Mediterranean, but at first could not find it. He did not therefore send a dispatch to London, to the effect that the enemy, refusing battle and dreading the British force, had withdrawn. He continued his search, and at length, at Aboukir, discovered the floating fortresses of the Republic. The sight for which he had been longing, the sight of the enemy tricolour, was for him the moment of action. Now he could attack upon the sea, the most admirable of battlefields, where no obstacles, no difficulties are imposed by the nature of the ground. His ships were built of wood—but does not an admiral who can dispose of submarines, poison gas, dreadnoughts, and airplanes still need the qualities of a Nelson?

The leader's position has changed in so far as war has undergone modification, but triumph still depends upon the intellectual and spiritual characteristics which ensured victory a thousand years ago. The qualities that make a great commander are the same as they were in the days of the Maid of Orleans; the type of the human beings who wage successful war is still unchanged.

But though the basic position of the military leader remains what it was, though his chief business is still to get together the parts of the military machine for the purposes of the military whole, his work has been modified alike in form and in scope. Just as a dictator cannot rule today with no more assistance than that of a few secretaries, so a modern commander cannot supervise unaided all the myriad elements which animate the battlefield for the purpose of annihilating the foe. His work includes the labyrinth of statistics, the uncertainties of psychology, the vacillations of politics. It is subdivided into specialties, which the general staff tries to master. The specialty of the commander-in-chief must be genius; yet even though he have it, it will not work to good effect unless the way has been prepared by the diligence of others. Modern warfare is a collective task, and its collectivist character persists at the supreme point of leadership. Victory and defeat represent the bodies of unknown soldiers and the intellectual labours of equally unknown general-staff officers. It is these unknown men who have given to the commander his freedom of decision, his steadfast resolve, his clear line of action. It is they who create the new facts of history, just as the slime brought down by the rivers creates new and solid earth.

It is, however, only the schoolboy exercise, as it were, of battle which forms the constant, familiar, and invariable element. Every coming war (and there is always a coming war) is like a sea whose roar we can hear though its colours and coasts are still unknown—as unknown as death, which for one signifies a crossword puzzle, for another, annihilation, and for a third, paradise.

To the war experts the next great struggle presents itself as a mystery thrusting like an impenetrable wall athwart their most accurate calculations. Not one of them can see through this wall; not one of them can climb over it. In all the general staffs sit the victims who are taken in the toils of their own science. The nightmare of the unknown will not be dispelled until the fearful awakening comes when they will find themselves locked in the deadly struggle. That struggle, grown independent of the acting and thinking individual, will dictate forms of butchery foreseen by none; and those who believed themselves lords of destruction will find themselves its terrified and distressful slaves. Who will prove best able to deal with the unforeseen emergencies arising out of the conflagration, and who is destined to commit traditional military science to the flames? Which of the general staffs will be found to have had most discernment, which of the commanders will display the most brilliant intuitions? For years the hostile war experts have been furtively watching one another like schoolboys in an examination trying to copy one another's answers.

The commanders, though from time to time they utter prophecies as confident as they are false, are in fact fully aware of their ignorance. But where, in a case involving such alarming responsibilities, knowledge ceases, there unquestioning faith, faith in the idea or in God, must begin. The soldier says of the art of war what Pascal (a man little inclined to jest) said of philosophy: "A true philosopher can make nothing of philosophy." In like manner Foch declares: "The unknown is the law of war."

This realm of the obscure, whose heaven is lighted by no stars and whose coasts have no harbours, alarms Foch. The general is overpowered by a sense of guilt; he is a fervent believer, prays for divine protection, and it is from this quiet corner of devotion that he contemplates the glories of the Temple of Fame. After the war has been won, the marshal composes a lengthy essay on Napoleon's strategy, in which he declares the emperor to have been the greatest warrior of all times, but a man foredoomed to ultimate failure—for Napoleon had tried to set himself above God. "Foch is a priest who decides, condemns, and teaches in the name of a doctrine," says an officer closely associated with him. He stresses the fact that he is a practising Catholic, assures us that prayer brings counsel, talks of the consolations of the life eternal. But when the battle rages, in critical situations, we hear him reiterating in a monotonous soliloquy: "Kill the Boches! Kill the Boches!"

In this cribbed life of ours, faith is one of the mainsprings of the mind, and one can only have faith in things that lie beyond proof. A woman does not, in order to become lovable, need to prove that she is worth loving. The only men to whom faith is unnecessary are those to whom the attempt to understand some small portion of the world seems more alluring than the notion of changing it a little. Men of action on the other hand—and the military commander is embodied action—must have a dogma which has become part of their very selves, one they will continue to love inalterably amid the storms of time. The generals of 1792 believed in the rights of man; Clemenceau, in the native turpitude of the Germans; Lenin, in communism. To those already convinced these convictions are so overwhelmingly convincing that proof has become superfluous, and they need only be enforced with the sword. Sow the good seed with force, with war, with utter ruthlessness, and then you will reap a millionfold the harvest of your own will.

Though enlightened by a dogma, the men of action may nonetheless be sceptics. Still, their doubts will merely relate to the complicated ways to the goal. The unknown elements in the coming struggle can only consist of an unfamiliar mingling of ingredients that are already familiar.

"Is it possible," inquires Foch, "to bring into conjunction these two words 'war' and 'school'? What are we really to understand as preparation for the form of activity known as war? On the battlefield, war runs its course amid unforeseen happenings, amid perils. It uses surprise, force, brutality, impetuosity, to engender terror. Study, on the other hand, lives exclusively by repose, method, thoughtfulness, reason. Is it possible, then, to teach the art of war? . . . The reality of the battlefield is something which cannot be studied in advance. However, we do our best to apply what we know. To be able to do anything, we must know a great deal and must know it well."

The commander and his expanded staff collect this knowledge before the struggle, collect it assiduously during the antecedent years of peace, studying the life of the hostile power whence war is likely to come. They try to discover the centre of the enemy's physical and moral forces. He who wishes to understand his neighbour's plan of campaign must first understand that neighbour's policy. The military aim may be inferred with considerable likelihood from the general magnitudes, the economic relationships, the traditions, and the interests, which are the real objects of the war—though little is said about them as a rule, for each country tries to persuade its soldiers that they are fighting for "moral" ends, so that the officially acknowledged grounds for a conflict are apt to be as hazy as virtue in general. The ultimate purpose of modern warfare (the annihilation of the enemy on the field of battle) is achieved, writes Foch, "in several actions which succeed one another without interludes . . . merging into one another, so that we can take only one result into account, the final upshot. Unless the beginning is successful, nothing is effected. . . . The discovery of the final aim must be sought in politics, for nothing else can tell us why the war is being waged."

Inasmuch as preparation for war, like the actual waging of war, lies within the domain of political activity, the organization which has to undertake the preparations for war is coincident with the whole mechanism of the State. The intellectual foundation on which the houses of the military staffs are built is a mingling of past and present. The Third Republic educated its own army chiefs. The government demanded from the population at large the same sort of obedience that a drill-sergeant expects from recruits. The Republic also held that little would have been done to ensure victory if provision for attack and defence had been left to the exclusive care of the staffs. The matter seemed too important to be consigned wholly to experts. The civilian will, absolute and undefiled, must play its part in the decisions of those whose trade was war. Thus, during the world war, France carried on the fight in the way that had already been prescribed for the organization of military authority in time of peace. This civilian will controlled the troops of the Republic, the measures of the general staff, and the activities of the commanders-in-chief in the field. A hundred years ago, Clausewitz vainly demanded for Prussia the military-political constitution which was realized by Clemenceau as an unchartered but eminently effective change. Quoth Clausewitz: "Can we say that political relationships between various peoples and various governments have been broken off when they have ceased to exchange diplomatic notes? What is war but another way of expressing political thought in a new kind of speech and writing? True, war has its own grammar, but not its own logic."

The Dreyfus affair was no more than a domestic political concern. It was a party squabble, a social scandal involving persons in high places, attended by sinister intrigues, run by sentimental innocents on the one hand, and by gloomy, ill-tempered conspirators on the other. Many of those concerned in it were playing to the gallery. But it led to a campaign against the Officers' Republic within the Republic, to a struggle against the military caste. Only to emphasize its dictatorship had the militarist junta wrongfully condemned the Jewish officer Dreyfus. The upshot was that, after ten years' political campaigning in opposition and in office, Georges Clemenceau—the man who had uprisen in his fury, had in numberless brilliant pamphlets stirred the general public by emptying the vials of his wrath, had associated himself with Émile Zola and had given Zola the war-cry "J'accuse"—overthrew the Bonapartist, Orleanist, Bourbon party of the wellborn in the army. Clemenceau believed that the army would be strengthened by the encouragement of radical and popular trends in politics; he shared neither the fears of the veteran generals nor the hopes of the pacifists that the masses would rise in their millions to wage war against war. Far from it! Just as Dostoeffsky bases his hopes for a Muscovite hegemony upon the despised and rejected, so does Clemenceau believe that those who comprise the extreme Left are the most active elements in the political world, and that precisely because they are radicals they will be the best soldiers in a coming war.

Since the French revolution, the many have sacrificed their lives with fervour in a succession of campaigns. There have been myriads of volunteers! Speaking generally, the common man is actually more comfortable in barracks, gets a larger share of the wealth created by common folk than he gets outside. Upon a different economic foundation, under changed conditions, there is realized the wish of Frederick William I of Prussia that "the king's warman should be better off than the lord of the manor's ploughman."

"The nations," writes Foch, "have the most various conceptions of greatness: monarchy, absolutism, autocracy, priesthood, the general demand, the revolutionary idea. It behoves us to know such things well, that we may understand the life of a country and thus guide our military operations."

Clemenceau, when he becomes prime minister in 1908, is acquainted with these ideas of Foch's, but he also knows that the general (pious in the eyes of the pope, yet a heretic from the outlook of the government) goes to mass, was educated by the Jesuits, and has a brother accounted one of the leaders of the Society of Jesus. Clemenceau's subordinates, indeed, are sedulous to keep him posted upon such matters, to let him know the names of the generals whose wives and daughters go to confession and seek absolution for sins or peccadilloes as the case may be. But the minister, after his triumph, is no longer afraid of devout soldiers. He knows that the adversaries of a regime, once they have been deprived of the hidden or acknowledged centre of their rebellion, may become the best servants of the very system against which they have hitherto been fighting. When Bonaparte was emperor, he liked to fill the chief posts in his administration with men who had been republican extremists or ardent partisans of the Bourbons.

Georges Clemenceau, premier of France, wants a head for the Staff College. He sends for General Foch, and thereupon (as we learn from René Puaux) the following conversation takes place:

"I offer you the command of the Staff College."

"Thank you, Sir, but you are doubtless unaware that one of my brothers belongs to the Society of Jesus. . . ."

"I know that, but I don't care a rap. You will turn out good officers, and nothing else matters."

Foch wants to organize leadership after the model of the Military Academy in Berlin. He admires the delicate and complicated mechanism of supreme command in the German army, but criticizes the methods used by France's eastern neighbours, and says that freedom of investigation is essential to the health of the army. "Laziness of mind leads to lack of discipline, to insubordination." Obedience, which is the simplest thing in the world, becomes the most complicated. The recognized and greatly extolled virtue of discipline may, in certain circumstances, prove disastrous. An officer in a responsible position must have the strength, the self-confidence, and the breadth of view that will enable him, not to obey, but to decide for himself; seeing that the essential thing is, not the carrying-out of orders, but the winning of a victory. "For one in supreme command," says Foch, "discipline means nothing but the realization of a mental activity under the guidance of character." This general interconnexion of the concrete with the abstract, of discipline with freedom, of the barrack with the academy, of knowledge with conjecture, of teaching with learning, of the traditional with the new —is a problem of cognition and of intellectual method. Foch holds that the most important thing of all is to think rightly. Even more than a strategical certainty he wants a philosophical certainty, that he may impart this philosophical certainty to his pupils. According to Descartes, the differences between our opinions "do not arise because some of us are shrewder than others, but only because we lead our thoughts along different paths, and do not contemplate the same objects." Foch would like to be able to get inside the brains of his pupils, to instil the same ideas into them all; but he does not want to order them about, which would be as easy as it would be ineffective; the students must of their own free will give utterance to the master's thoughts.

For him, the prerequisite of understanding, of independence of mind, of the great adventure of indiscipline, is knowledge. At the summit of the hierarchy, notwithstanding the soul-deadening influence of militarist professionalism, there must prevail an alertness, a mobility, thanks to which the huge military machine must not merely remain capable of automatic activity, but must be permeated with ideas. This academy is at one and the same time advisory and initiative, legislative and executive, so that one might think it was concerned rather with speculations in the Temple of Wisdom regarding the nature of the Platonic State than with finding an answer to the practical question: "How can a maximum of enemy things and persons be annihilated in a minimum of time?"

Foch considered a two years' term of study at the Staff College inadequate, and wanted to extend the period by one year. The number of the sifted and almost-anointed was not to exceed fifteen. This reform did not really get beyond the experimental stage—an experiment which lasted only a twelvemonth. In accordance with his advice, the "Centre des Hautes Études Militaires" was now founded. Thither were summoned the officers who were considered to have shown exceptional talent as commanders of large bodies of troops. The ancient catchword, "Make room for the able!" is, however, hard to realize in practice, resembling as it does the cry of the man in a tight place, "Geniuses, rally round me!" Who are the most able? Foch thinks that his method of selection will discover them, and he wishes to assemble his chosen few in the Centre des Hautes Études Militaires. They will constitute the innermost general staff. The army chiefs must, according to Foch, be picked from out this inner ring, for no others can know, excogitate, effectively inaugurate, the most important plans; they alone are fitted for the work of leadership.

It is the desire of the future Marshal of France that the power and authority of the generalissimo shall extend into all branches of the army. The général-en-chef is to be responsible for everything that is done to make ready for war.

What Foch was here trying to do for France, Moltke had effected for Germany in the course of a long lifetime. The Prussian field-marshal was privileged to create a general-staff corps in conformity with the doctrine he had himself elaborated, to conduct all its activities, and then to lead into a foreign land the army he had trained from its birth upwards. Having written a play, he was stage manager at its production, and impersonated the star role. The contemplation of this fulfilment after long preparation, of this crowning success, is a delight to Foch, who in his book *De* *la conduite de la guerre* tries to describe and to relive the life of victorious headquarters staffs. The marshal's style is rough-hewn and clumsy—too soldierly to be agreeable. What gives his writing a swing is the warmth of his conviction, his vigour, his healthy pugnacity, and his freedom from prolixity and hysteria. Following Yorck and Wartenburg, he seeks the key to military history in army headquarters. Foch discovers mistakes in the German leadership of the campaign of 1870; opines that Moltke was rather a chief of staff than a great commander; shows that Napoleon had a more direct influence on the battlefield than the Prussian field-marshal; seeks to prove that Moltke's authority was restricted, that his general staff was too large, that his actions were too much influenced by political considerations dependent upon the federalist character of the German State.

In actual fact, the modern German art of war originated during the fight against Napoleon. In the reconstruction of the Prussian military system, an attempt was made to substitute industry for Bonaparte's intuition. Scharnhorst and his pupil Gneisenau established the main lines of headquarters organization, and to Scharnhorst likewise Foch's system of leadership through the

Staff College would have seemed ideal. In the last analysis Foch, indeed, like Scharnhorst, tries to make collective endeavour do the work of genius. Moltke, though accompanied by so many kings, was able to enforce his leadership upon the staff of princely guests "with their innumerable aides-de-camp, grooms, and led horses." True, Foch wants to obviate from the outset the difficulties of organization which troubled Moltke as a heritage of the famous German local independence. He wishes to make the generalissimo supreme in fact as well as in name. Yet it is not he but Joffre who realizes this idea two years before the war. Foch gives up the headship of the Staff College, becoming first the commander of the eighth army corps, and then (shortly before the outbreak of the war) commander of the twentieth army corps at Nancy.

His doctrine of Napoleonic military leadership has triumphed.

Nevertheless the offensive was not a discovery of Foch's, was not an original invention of republican staffs. Since 1870 it had been a dogma of military leadership both in France and in Germany. The Franco-Russian alliance had enforced it upon Germany. France had built a girdle of "defensive" fortresses along the German frontier, to facilitate attack from behind secure positions. Military tradition was enough to impose upon the French Republic the adoption of an offensive tactic. Since the beginning of the seventeenth century, French armies had again and again marched far beyond the geographical frontiers of the country. Twice they had crossed the Pyrenees; six times, the Alps; nine times, the Danube; times without number, the Rhine. To the French general staff, no less than to the German, the doctrine of the offensive had seemed the heaven-sent doctrine of victory, and the belief prevailed that by assuming the offensive the would-be victorious general was delivered from the torment of uncertainty. This only shows us that the science of war, based upon the study of the latest battles, limps painfully in the rear of the facts, and is continually looking backward in search of a haven of refuge. Machine-guns, poison gas, dirigibles, airplanes, trench mortars, electrical wire-cutters —all these industrial products which the late war bestowed on us with that mute or enthusiastic readiness with which mothers give birth to their sons—were known before 1914, but were ignored for war purposes or held in little esteem. Among more recent developments, only the railways were regarded as of considerable importance to the soldier, though in this case there was the experience of 1866 and 1870 to guide the military theoretician. The authorities had declared that the art of war must consist above all in the study of the adversary's material resources, but army men had never foreseen the war of the nations, the factories spouting steel, the State falsifications of the currency, the enduring tolerance of hunger and privation behind the fighting front. Schlieffen's opinion that a strategy of exhaustion, of indefinite prolongation of a state of war, the persistence of a condition in which "the support of millions would necessitate the expenditure of milliards," were impracticable, had also been the opinion of all his successors in the general staff; and even after the battle of the Marne, Joffre declared that the war could not last two months longer.

Foch made the same prophecy. He kneeled before the statue of the offensive, brought with him an offering of proofs as the faithful bring candles to Our Lady's altar, and gave a mathematical demonstration of the triumph of attack over defence. "The perfectionment of firearms," he wrote, "has served only to increase the power of the offensive. . . . The rational tactic of the offensive has always been to concentrate at a given point more rifles and big guns than the enemy. Today, when the rifles and the big guns have been improved, the advantage of doing so is even greater than before."

The simplicity of this mathematical proof, which overlooked the way in which the adversary could dig himself into well-protected positions, disclosed, not the power of offensive firearms, but the ardour of the doctrine of the offensive which held sway in the French general staff.

The adepts of this doctrine, the pupils of the Centre des Hautes Études Militaires, had in 1912 (under cover of Millerand as minister for war) entered into a conspiracy on its behalf, had carried out an effective intrigue at headquarters to ensure the supremacy of their own strategic plans. This small circle of initiates—persons united by the ties of an idea common to them all, youthful enthusiasts, resolute, supple, brought up to believe fervently in the dogma of the offensive, tenacious, inwardly convinced that the fate of the country turned upon the putting of their own ideas into execution—stood shoulder to shoulder behind General Joffre, who with his air of straightforward simplicity made an easy conquest of the responsible minister. The change in organization at the summit of the hierarchy gave Joffre a power he had neither dreamed of nor desired, with the result that the active young men who formed his bodyguard (the "Third Section" of the general staff) got their chance. The supreme war council, which was nominally in control of the general staff, was left to devote itself to bureaucratic trivialities; sceptical officers were sent to out-of-the-way garrisons. No commanding general was allowed to glean a hint of the plans which, in the event of war, he would have to carry out. Of the mysterious document in which these plans were embodied we know only the title, "Directive No. 1."

The mystery of the plan was, however, dispelled, and the brilliant but impracticable aim was made manifest to all, when in August 1914 the armies of the Republic were one after another driven back.

Only in Lorraine, where the offensive was at first successful, only upon this field specially chosen by the French general staff, was a further advance attempted, for, as Foch said, "the purpose of winning a battle is to be enabled to win the next." But the next battle was lost.

"If," writes General de Maud'Huy, "only one army had been beaten, it might have been supposed that this was the fault of its leader; but when all five were beaten, who could be blamed but the supreme commander of these armies, the commander-in-chief?"

With the disappearance of the offensive, of manœuvring, of war in the open field, of the hallowed tactic of breaking the enemy's front and turning the enemy's flank, and with the replacement of these time-honoured methods of warfare by the establishment of an uninterrupted line of trenches stretching from the North Sea to Switzerland and enlivened only by the twitchings of men in the death agony, the rights of the generalissimo as conceived by Foch and as realized by the "Third Section" ceased, for practical purposes, to exist. Galiéni, the defender of Paris, would not recognize Joffre's supremacy, and the "général-en-chef" communicated with his subordinate through the instrumentality of Poincaré. On the northern sector of the front Marshal French, the British commander, had only 70,000 men under his orders, and also had in his pocket instructions to the effect that, come what might, he was to remain independent of the foreign general staff. He even refused to harmonize his operations with those of his nearest neighbour, Laurezac, who was only a general of division, whereas French was a field-marshal. A weighty question of titles complicated the issue. Joffre and Galiéni, when writing to French addressed him as "M. le maréchal," but French replied to "Mon cher général" and not to "Mon général." This annoyed Joffre and Galiéni, since the phrase "Mon cher général" would only have been proper if used by a superior to a subordinate. At length Joffre got them all out of the imbroglio by writing to the angry Galiéni and the still angrier French as "Mon cher camarade."

Historians—who, notwithstanding their devotion to concrete facts, are fond of adornment—titivate events, inventing (for the greater glory of Clio) genius, destiny, guilt, and manifold other arabesques. What would a successful war be worth without the patriotic legend? No more than a lost campaign! What is victory when a decade has elapsed? An agreeable memory for those who read about it in the records, and a source from which those few who were already rich before the war will continue for a century or more to draw—thus receiving part of their income from the sometime enemy. But the memory must have names as points of fixation. In front of the bare wall of the late war, to relieve the monotonous description of monotonous battles, to dispel the dreariness of twenty-four thousand hours in the trenches, people build statues, and marshals' faces are cast in bronze.

From the star-hero we demand what the Greeks demanded of their oracles. The hero of our great-grandfather's campaigns was immortalized in oil paintings which are sadly faded now. Still, there he is on horseback, marvellously successful, looking like Jupiter. "A bloodthirsty warrior, but an excellent father at home in time of peace." Today we have photographs instead. The commander, deep in thought, sits before a large table on which lies an open map. With his left hand he supports his grizzled head, while in his right he holds the pencil with which he is underlining the names of the places where victories are to be won. In such an attitude, Joffre is supposed to have said: "Retreat to the Marne, but no farther!" The actual fact was that the Marne was but the victory of one blunder over another, the victory of French mistakes over German, the collapse of two antagonistic plans for an offensive. The French general staff, utterly disconcerted, now wished to abandon the defence of Paris, opining that the capital was merely a mark upon the map. The relinquishment of this great centre was only prevented by the direct orders of the government, and by General Galiéni, who was intriguing with Poincaré and Viviani against Joffre, and now took the law into his own hands. On the battlefields of the Marne were arrayed each against the other, not only the rival general staffs, but in addition all the peculiarities in the lives of two nations, the strong and the weak sides of two political systems. In one of his bulletins, Joffre laid special stress on the preparatory work which had been done by French civilians, writing: "The government of the Republic may well be proud of the army which it has brought into being."

That was the perpetually changing government of which all the generals were incurably afraid; the government which was often actuated by the most irrelevant motives; the government in whose corridors traps awaited the unwary; the government which had fled to Bordeaux in special trains. Those left behind in Paris, those for whom there had been no room in the sleeping-cars, sang the *Marseillaise* mockingly with a new refrain,

Aux gares, citoyens!
Montez dans les wagons!

and nicknamed the government "franc-fuyeur" instead of "franc-tireur."

"The three great chiefs of the French army" (it is thus that Winston Churchill describes the search for a generalissimo) "the war horses of the fighting front, commanders of armies or groups of armies since the beginning of the war—Foch, Castelnau, Pétain—were all, for reasons that seemed sufficient at the time, ruled out. Of Castelnau it was said by the socialist Left that he was too religious. Of Pétain it was complained that he was not sufficiently gracious to members of the parliamentary commissions and other persons of distinction who visited his headquarters. And it was stated that General Sarrail [who belonged to the Left] had said of him: 'He's not one of us.' . . . Of Foch a keen propaganda, widespread but untraceable, had said: 'His health is broken; his temper and his nerves have given way. He is finished.' "

Every general who wished to conquer the enemy had to act within the framework thus imposed. This was his political terrain. He was forced to adapt himself to the prevailing system just as to the nature of the countryside in which he had to conduct military operations. For this reason, if we wish to throw light on Foch's victory, what we have primarily to consider is, not so much his preconceived ideas, but the nature and working of the republican mechanism which imposed limitations on his activity. In the late war the character of a general was of more moment than were his ideas. The enormous accumulation of material, the countless levies, the weight of numbers, seemed to paralyse the mind; and the rigidity of the front was but a reflex of mental immobility. In their hopeless perplexity, the leaders ever and again, at almost regular intervals, issued orders for an attempt to break through the enemy lines. In this new and unanticipated form of struggle there was (since, after all, it was a struggle between human beings) no suspension of the individual qualities of leaders and led. If the value of troops in the fighting line consists in their capacity to remain an organized force despite the storms and shocks of battle, a like strength is essential to the leader, though in him the necessary qualities are much more predominantly mental. Despite the inborn cowardice of man, despite uncertainties and obscurities, despite the conflicting nature of the reports which come to hand from moment to moment, and despite the probable losses, he must always have new and ultimate reserves in his innermost self, must have faith in the future, and even amid catastrophe must retain the calm of the ideal priest. This animating will of the commander lies all the more beyond the bounds of calculation because, once the movements of his troops have taken place, he is no longer in a position to intervene effectively. He is like a paralysed mother whose child has fallen into the sea, and who has no resource but to pray, shouting to the child to keep itself afloat as best it may.

On the Marne, at Ypres, and on the Somme, Foch possesses that harmony which in the great commander is aroused by horror. The management of the struggle throws a spell over his body and his mind. On the Marne he collaborates with decisive effect by disregarding the doctrine he has himself inculcated at the Academy, for, believing the eleventh army corps to be in great peril, he withdraws two divisions from the firing line and sends them with all speed to help his colleague—an operation which in textbooks on strategy is stigmatized as one calculated to ensure defeat, but which here proves successful.

"The measure," said Foch later, "was extremely hazardous. It was just as likely to fail as to succeed, but it succeeded." The movement of troops while the battle rages is characteristic of his ability. To save the face of his theory, he terms the maximum of the desired mobility "an offensive." During the battle of the Marne, when most of the troops under his command were unsteady, the general wired to his superior: "My centre is giving way. My right is withdrawing. Situation excellent. I am about to attack."

When the offensive became impossible, his faith in it aroused in his mind the idea of the reserve mass. At Ypres, whither he was sent after the Marne as "assistant to the commander-in-chief," Foch, undismayed by the difficulties of the position, was continually talking of attack. Even though no attack was made, his army was able to check the enemy advance. His aim was now more modest, but he could not get along without having a semblance of certain possibilities for an offensive at his disposal, that he might adapt them to circumstances.

The art of war would, however, not be an art, were it not poor in possibilities and, none the less, expectant of mighty results. These difficulties of performance undermine the walls of preconceived opinion no matter how dogmatic a man may be; and the commander has always to face war with a certain naïveté, as if it were something quite new to him. Speaking to the staff of the ninth army corps like a professor to his pupils, Foch says: "Gentlemen, there is one thing you must do, and that is, forget what you have learned. It behoves us to carry out the very opposite of what we used to teach."

In the further course of the struggle, faced by the livid and murderous unfamiliarity of trench warfare, Foch found himself at a loss. All the commanders during these years were wandering in a maze as concerned anything beyond issuing the orders of the day, and they felt like pickets in an unknown forest when night has begun to fall.

"As things now stand," writes Foch under date October 1, 1917, "we have to ask ourselves how the Entente proposes to realize its war aims. Maybe by perpetually delaying their fulfilment, by waiting and by partial attacks here and there, after the manner of the Franco-British army since June? The only result of these tactics is to keep the enemy on the alert, using up his forces of course, but ours as well. . . . If we go on like this, our belligerent action will not deprive him of any of the material and moral means essential to his existence. In that case it will only be economic difficulties of one kind or another that will lead him to ask for terms. The blockade will cut the sources of his life!

"But is there any prospect that, after all, by providing the necessary troops and material, we shall be able to deliver such blows as will shatter and destroy the enemy organization?"

The means which Foch here prescribes as indispensable for the defeat of the foe were provided, not by the fabled "eagle eye" of the commander, not by his efforts and ordinances, but by the integral policy of the Republic—by the interplay of the alliances; by the ties connecting France with the five continents; by the ocean which, with the breaking of every wave, brought soldiers, funds, and munitions to the shores of

France. When the time had come for finding a head on which to fit this crown of power, when the time had come for establishing unity of command, it was civilians, Lloyd George and Clemenceau, who overcame the political, the personal, the concrete, and the abstract difficulties, entrusting to one general the lives of seven million soldiers whose names were inscribed on seven million identity disks. The new and more favourable conditions were a gift to Foch; they were not his own creation. His work had been the patience with which he awaited their coming. He had bided his time while the hammer was growing heavier, and while the enemy's helmet was becoming thinner and was being weakened by many cracks, until at last it would be possible to deliver a deadly, a brain-shattering blow. Every war partakes of the nature of a fight of armed men against unarmed. Towards the end of a campaign, the material superiority of the victor becomes so overwhelming that the end resembles the butchery of natives by colonial troops.

Thus the political activities which had led to the concentration of such immense forces at the French headquarters, working in conjunction with the shifts and subterfuges of parliamentary necessity, led to the appointment of none other than Foch as generalissimo.

Since December 1916, indeed, he had borne the title of army chief, but had had no active command. The government had recalled him from the front to the capital, but not this time because of the intrigues of any commission. On the contrary, the authorities were well aware of the uncontested influence he exercised over his staff; they knew his methods, esteemed his sturdy will, valued his power of taking comprehensive views. But Painlevé as minister for war wanted an expert at his elbow, a man whose authority would help him to cope with the allies and with the French generals as well. The minister was continually at odds with the général-en-chef, and knew that Foch, likewise, disapproved of that worthy's arrangements. Shortly before the war, in a stimulating address, Foch had advocated the commander's absolute independence in accordance with the imperial Napoleonic model. The "Third Section's" coup before 1914 had been fully in accordance with the spirit of his teaching, although it had not advantaged him personally in the matter of power. Now he was to become an instrument against the system he had extolled and which had been realized with his approval. Foch was appointed chief of general staff, and was to remain in Paris—a prisoner of the ministry. In the very middle of the war, the generalissimo in the field was deprived of part of his authority, which was transferred to the chief of general staff working under the direct supervision of the minister for war. The decree of May 12, 1917, signed by Poincaré and Painlevé, declares that "le chef d'état major-général de l'armée" is the representative of the war minister for all technical problems connected with military operations. He discusses with the minister everything which bears on the general plan of operations, and decides in conjunction with the minister all questions connected with the commanding generals.

The government's power to deal with officers of high rank as it pleased now became a terror, not only to these commanding generals, but also to their entourage. The members of the staffs, when dismissed, were dismissed with all honour —but the tokens of distinction had the value of the "excellent character" which every one writes for a cook he is only too glad to get rid of. They meant "thank you kindly for going away."

The chief of general staff was henceforward equipped with the authority of the government. Though War Minister Painlevé was slow and reluctant to use his new powers, the situation changed when Clemenceau succeeded him in office. Bad days had dawned for Generalissimo Pétain. The new head at the Ministry for War had no use for him. But Clemenceau insisted on unquestioning obedience from the chief of general staff as well. When the two had gone to London together, and when Foch exceeded his powers, the minister for war (so Churchill tells us) snapped at him in open conference to the embarrassment of the auditors: "Taisez-vous; I am the representative of France!"

Then, on March 21st of the last year of the war, came the German offensive southward of Arras, prepared by Ludendorff behind a skilfully woven mantle of silence, and opened by a cannonade of unexampled violence. The fifth British army corps was annihilated, and the connexion between the allied forces had been reduced to a thin thread which might snap at any moment. The commanding generals sent despairing appeals for aid to the premiers in London and Paris respectively. Three days later, at dawn on March 24th, Clemenceau (the old man of seventy-seven) arrived at the front in a motor car, accompanied by Foch. The two had come to meet the ministers and field-marshals of His Britannic Majesty, hastily assembled, full of consternation, fearing a terrible disaster. But at this juncture not one of them—not Clemenceau, nor Foch, nor Lord Milner, nor Pétain, nor Douglas Haig—knew that within four-and-twenty hours the chief of general staff from Paris was to become supreme commander of the allied forces in France.

Why, at this Doullens conference, was Foch, rather than any other, chosen to fill the post?

It was not because he had expounded the best plan of campaign, or enunciated exceptionally brilliant ideas. Clemenceau asked Pétain what steps he proposed to take for the defence of the communications south of Amiens. Pétain replied that he had only twenty divisions at his disposal. Foch was of opinion that with no more than these forces it was still possible to retain the upper hand at the threatened spot. The other military experts gave their views. Then Lord Milner rose and said to the French premier: "I should like a few words with you in private." The result of this conversation was that the supreme command was given to Foch, who had that day shown more self-confidence, more certainty, than any of the other generals; to Foch, who had declared simply and plainly that victory was still possible, and had thus brought all present under his spell. At the close of the conference, his appointment seemed as much a matter of course as that morning it had seemed unlikely. In affairs of outstanding moment, what appear to be immaterial and even irrelevant motives—impressions, moods, atmosphere—are often of decisive importance.

Pétain remained commander-in-chief of the French forces; Haig, of the British. Both were subordinate to Foch, who was to double his new position with that of chief of general staff. The marshal believed that he had realized his ideal of the Napoleonic command. His one dread was lest there should be too cumbrous an apparatus, which might prove as inert as the fighting front itself. Now he would have to bear the burden of two organizations. Such a plenitude of powers carries with it innumerable desks, typewriters, archives, clerks, managers. Would not the bureaucratic machinery through which he would have to work impair his freedom of movement and deprive him of direct influence on the course of operations? The apparatus at the head of things ought to be as slender as the bronze archangel on the top of the Castle of Sant' Angelo in Rome. The old headquarters had had five hundred officers at work, for it consisted of four departments: personnel, intelligence, munitions, and operations. Foch decided to keep only the reduced operations-bureau working close at hand. The mass of reserves was placed under his direct orders. Foch's assistant, Weygand, was fond of saying: "We have no general staff here!"

Marshal Foch was in supreme command from March 25th until the armistice. During the first hundred days, the German armies were still attacking; during the last three months and more, the Allied forces had assumed the offensive. The last battle has no name. It was not fought in any one locality, but extended from village to village till it petered out near the frontier, in the glooms of a chill November day. Not one of these hundred and fifteen days will live in the memory like the day of Austerlitz, Jena, or Sedan, to fix the attention of an eternally pugnacious mankind upon some particular spot in the Temple of Fame.

But were the battles which go by the names of Austerlitz and Moskva (Borodino) fought respectively at the town and the river of that name?

The former took place beside the Pond of Aujezd, and the latter on the banks of the Kaluga. Bonaparte, however, being chief advertising agent as well as head of the firm, knew that French tongues would find Aujezd difficult to pronounce, and that Moskva would call up fascinating pictures of the gateway leading into Asia. That was why he rechristened his battles.

Foch would have been unworthy of his devotion to the spirit of the Napoleonic campaigns, he would have shown himself unmindful of his childhood's dreams, he would have been indifferent to the sweets of fame and proof against the power of tradition, had he not longed in the hour of victory to do honour to the Master of warfare and to exemplify his own teaching by fighting just one more battle in accordance with the established rules of art, with great encircling movements, wing-operations, points of junction on all the main roads of Europe. According to his plan, the combined forces of the coalition were to meet somewhere near Dresden. The Army of the East was ordered to make its way up the Danube; the Italians were to move along the Adige; the Anglo-Franco-American legions were ready to cross the Rhine by forced marches. The directives sent by

Foch to General Diaz, the Italian commander, remind us of Napoleon's missives to his viceroy, Eugene. Nothing can ever have seemed so inopportune to the Marshal of France as the German request for an armistice.

Even at Versailles, Foch continued to press for a policy on the lines of the strategy above described. Three memorials penned by him upon the terms of peace demanded as unconditional guarantees the annexation of the left bank of the Rhine and a military hegemony of the right bank, declaring categorically that France would be lost unless these conditions were imposed. Clemenceau, who certainly wanted to grab as much as he could, explained to Foch in the most friendly way possible that the memorials could not be presented to the Allies at Versailles. He had tried to do something of the sort before, had been snubbed, and was not going to put his foot in it again. Foch was stubborn, and begged permission to lay his views before the French ministry. Aware that the marshal was on friendly terms with Poincaré, Clemenceau agreed to this. The victor, accompanied by Weygand, came to the ministerial council, and, as soon as greetings had been exchanged, asked that minutes of the proceedings should be taken. "There are no minutes kept at a ministerial council," replied Clemenceau. "You have come here that you may have an opportunity of expounding your ideas. When you have done so, the government will discuss them and decide in your absence."

Then, turning to President Poincaré (whose secret thoughts he divined), Clemenceau said: "The ministry can only take action in private. I shall withdraw if there is any discussion in which persons participate who have no constitutional right to do so, but only the right to be heard. Now, Monsieur le Maréchal, please expound your views."

In a monotonous and unenthusiastic voice, Foch read aloud the memorial with whose tenor every one present was already familiar, and left the hall. He shook his head sorrowfully as he departed, convinced that the peace could not now be a classical one.

Kemal Pasha, or From National Farce to National Revolution

KEMAL PASHA

I

SHORTLY before Enver Pasha, a man of forty, led a rising in Bokhara against his friends of yesterday, against the Soviets, and (like a brigand-chief of romance) fell pierced by numerous bullets—he was travelling by train from Leningrad to Moscow in the company of a German communist who was to be called to account in the Kremlin for the failure of the German Soviet Republic to come into being. Said Enver: "You must be a lot of weaklings. Your party in Germany is said to have a membership of two hundred thousand, and yet you could not make a revolution. I raised a rebellion in Macedonia with only a few hundred men at my back, won over a whole army corps, and sentenced all the nonagenarians of a centuries-old hierarchy to a diet of bread and water."

Enver's reproaches were grounded upon experience. It was not only Macedonia! All his victories had been snatched in the same way. With a few stout fellows of his own kidney, he had climbed the thick walls of the imperial seraglio, determined, in the name of the new era, to taste the dainties to be found in the gardens of the caliph.

He and his youthful followers lived as the improvised leaders of a ten-year's officers' rising. Europe saw nothing, talked of nothing, but them.

Who were they, these doughty knights? What was the secret of their success? The impotence of Turkey! Her incapacity to organize an army after the western European model!

The foundations of this State were antagonistic to military effort, for the carrying of an automatic pistol does not suffice to make a soldier. The conditions in which men called up for military service have been accustomed to live make themselves felt in army life, although no heed is taken of them in army regulations. They determine the fighting strength of an army quite as much as do cannon. Of the Ottomans called to the colours, eighty per cent were peasant smallholders and twenty per cent were tenant farmers. Not their poverty alone, but their detachment from the busy world, their habituation to the life of remote villages and hamlets, gave them a sovereign indifference, wrapped them in a mantle of contented aloofness. What politicians and historians described as the "decay of Turkish power" was but the expression of the fact that these men, whose horizon was limited by the boundaries of their own farms, had no interest in the fate of the Turkish Empire.

The officers, on the other hand, were townsmen, sons of officials or sprung from the rising commercial bourgeoisie. They represented the only intellectuals in the country.

The liveliest and most adventurous among them detested the extant regime.

In the sleepy palace of Abdul Hamid, they could discern no hopes of advancement. They regarded the sultan as a bird of prey, and his supporters as men engaged in the defence of a haunted ruin; they luxuriated in the friendly sunshine of western liberal ideas. The leading articles in the newspapers of Paris and Berlin seemed to them full of strange and splendid promise. Contemplating from afar the façade of the Palais

Bourbon and the German Reichstag, diligent readers of the parliamentary reports, they fancied that like rhetoric uttered in a like building would magically transform the wooden houses of Constantinople into edifices of stone and brick, and would in the twinkling of an eye realize the thousand and one marvels of technical achievement, speeded communication, administrative centralization, and military preparedness.

Kemal Pasha, too, lived in this atmosphere of revolutionary hopes. But the open door of the Military Academy gave access both ways. Through it entered, like scraps of paper blown before the wind, rumours of impending change; and through it also there passed to the seraglio rumours of what the young officers were doing and thinking. The loyalists in Abdul Hamid's palace regarded no report as too trifling for consideration. The established authorities did not invariably have recourse to the executioner; they liked to play with living men. Together with his lieutenant's commission, Kemal received orders to betake himself to Damascus. Thence, shortly afterwards, he was transferred to Jaffa for training. In his case being "sent into the desert" was no empty form of words.

The disgruntled officers were likewise the most active. Their organization was widespread. They were on the staffs, they sat in the anterooms of generals in high command, they lobbied at the ministries, and they danced round the throne. Most of the men who wielded authority were masters in the art of squinting, being able to keep one eye fixed on the sultan, who distributed the plums, while with the other eye they looked indulgently at underlings, whether these were industrious and patient or discontented and eager for a change. Thanks to their complaisance, the banished Kemal was able to move from Jaffa to Salonica. Shortly after his arrival at the latter place, the military conspiracy proved victorious.

In the year 1908, the new constitution was universally acclaimed. Laws were manufactured as easily as buttons. The constitution provided a lot of printed paper in addition to plenty of bunting. The carrying into effect of all these paragraphs so hastily penned and so cordially received would have been a radical revolution indeed!

Now the victors began to squabble among themselves. Every battalion commander was convinced that it was his lot in particular to become the Cromwell of the Bosphorus, talked about the matter in his sleep, and was filled with the divine afflatus. One officer's conspiracy followed another, just as the harem intrigues had done under the whole regime. Many shots were fired, and the favourite of yesterday was hunted to death by a sometime friend. Mantraps were set in the gateways of the ministerial offices. Every club had its own saviour; every restaurant, its own bravo; every pothouse, its own prophet. Every pasha had to make a rising of his own, announced today in letters a foot long as a famous victory, and fading into oblivion before a week had passed.

The art of politics consisted in an adroit seizure of those persons who happened to constitute the cabinet at the time—and Byzantium was still Byzantium.

II

Kemal's enthusiasm for the Young Turks was short-lived. Nevertheless this soldiers' revolution contained, despite its incredible confusion, the germs of serious change, for even in chaos there is a fixed point around which everything whirls.

Conspiracies and revolts were the forces that burst the dam which had hitherto restrained the slowly accumulating waters of discontent. The result was that the streets were flooded, and were even dirtier than before.

Amid the ensuing military collapse of Turkey, which was accompanied by an unexpected change of scenes and leaders at Constantinople, Kemal continued to believe in the possibility of Ottoman resistance. For the sake of his own future, he had to keep in close touch with the new regime. The situation nurtured in him a peculiar diplomatic flexibility, which has remained his most conspicuous characteristic. He found it necessary to combine obedience to the victorious party with his personal faith and his personal ambition, to conceal his independence behind a mask of pliability, and to win the confidence of the lords of the hour so that they trusted him implicitly. Behind this screen, he could move freely, and cultivate his heretical opinions. Drawing the victors' attention to their own interests, he became an indispensable even though subordinate collaborator. Kemal's military achievements helped him here. He tended more and more to occupy the position of strategical expert, but still kept a close watch on the course of events. His positive knowledge of military science was to help others, his chiefs, as well as himself; his negative attitude of scepticism was to safeguard himself. He was careful to avoid the very thing that the other ambitious young Ottomans of that day most earnestly desired. He would not allow himself to become identified with the innermost brotherhood of the Young Turks, and was thus able to escape compromising his future.

This capacity for dancing between yes and no, this policy of a thousand reserves and unexpressed thoughts, this apparent indifference to everything outside the domain of a specialty, are frequent characteristics of great soldiers. Perhaps they are in some way connected with the military handicraft, and may even be essential prerequisites to its successful practice; certainly it is they which transform a soldier's profession into a vocation.

It was especially the most capable officers among the rebels who, for this reason, found Kemal congenial. They thought he had no interest in politics, would never become a dangerous rival, was no more than a good fellow who would remain an inconspicuous worker on the general staff. When, therefore, in Constantinople, the ruling victors of yesterday were, thanks to a new conspiracy, driven out of the ministerial offices at the bayonet's point, and when Salonica (the focus of the rebellion) armed for the march on the capital, Kemal was appointed chief of the general staff of the first combined division. He did his work with as much precision as if the troops had been engaged in summer manœuvres, and his success made him famous with the rapidity peculiar to times of war and revolution.

He was now running full-sail before the wind of his career.

His course brought him in contact with Enver Bey, who could not live without a clique, and therefore regarded as an intruder every one who was not numbered among his own immediate supporters. Enver's military talent was marred by the egoistic quality of his imagination; this resolute man could never get on quietly with his work, for his best ideas were continually obscured by the disturbing image of self. He waged war with the imperturbability of a man who has a superstitious hope in the fortunes of the morrow. Non-existent divisions, created by miracle, moved to and fro on the field of his strategic plans. But Kemal (who as general-staff officer was Enver's collaborator) knew that the uncertainties of a campaign, the illusions which are inseparable from every struggle, must not be needlessly magnified by the superaddition of the spooks of optimism.

It was in their work together that the two men's mutual enmity acquired a firm foundation.

By Enver's orders, Kemal was sent abroad, being appointed military attaché at Sofia. During the Balkan war he returned home on his own initiative, and in the Gallipoli peninsula he led troops at the front. Disheartened by the Turkish defeat, he considered a thoroughgoing reorganization necessary, and was opposed to the entry of Turkey into the world war on the German side in the autumn of 1914. For that very reason, and as if in punishment, Enver gave him a command under Liman von Sanders. This German officer knew Kemal's views and feelings, but valued him none the less. Notwithstanding the success of the Turks in resisting the Allied forces, Kemal wanted his country to make peace, for the nature of the general situation was not hidden from him. A Turkish nationalist, he believed that, even if the Central Powers were in the end to prove victorious on all fronts, Turkey would remain prisoned, as it were, and wholly subjected to foreign influence. Defeat, on the other hand, would submerge the country beneath the flood of her own nationalities. Nothing but the popularity of his victories saved him from a personal catastrophe. No one could save Constantinople!

The capital became a panorama of the infirmities of Turkey. Policy ceased for the time being to be abstract, and, with all its ramifications, assumed a concrete visage—tinted, rather than simply black-and-white. The liquidation of the Eastern Question (had not conqueror after conqueror hoped for this during two centuries?) was to be the occasion for a gala performance. The supers in the piece, looking on dumbly from every quarter of the town, were the Turks; and, though supers, they had to pay for the show. Every one of these million tongue-tied persons was being taught politics in his own household.

In the Bosphorus were anchored the grey warships of the Allies, the gun-muzzles looking at the shore like threatening eyes, determined to see everything. The first troops to land were British. This was a diplomatic move on the part of the island State against its allies, against Italy and France. French colonial troops and French bluejackets followed; then came the Italians. Who was in charge of the town? The rivalry of the military chancelleries flamed up. Each of them acted independently of the others, making arrests, snapping up this or that unconsidered trifle out of the oriental heritage—the diplomatists taking provinces, and the tommies anything they could stuff into their knapsacks—issuing orders, supervising, playing at politics, seeking supporters. Thus ran the anarchy for a time, until at length the squabblers united to form the Inter-Allied Control, that they might hold sway with less control than ever.

After all, these things were only to be expected in accordance with the rules and traditions of war. The loser pays.

But now armed foes emerged from the capital itself. In Pera, across the Galata bridge, lived the Greeks. Down to 1915, they and the Armenians had had the trade of the city in their hands. During three long years they had been trembling for their goods and their money. Now they waved flags, and were convinced that old Byzantium was to be the new capital of Greece. Every Turk's possessions belonged to the first enemy who could lay hands on them.

A few months later came the Russians. Not led by victorious generals, as had been the Muscovite hope for centuries, but hungry and penniless, the spindrift of insufferable poverty. Myriads of refugees had fled to Constantinople in search of a livelihood. Many of these poor wretches would sell all that was left to them in order to enjoy a night's carouse; to queue up next morning, plate in hand, in front of the barracks, praying for a meal from the British soup-kitchen.

The unhappy Turks, who, ashamed to make a parade of their misery, had crawled out of sight, were not granted even a smell of this beggar's broth.

III

In the inmost heart of all things the perdurable, it would seem, holds sway; and the movements of history, the ebb and flow of events, appear to be but varying forms of the same human affects.

There was an "Eastern Question" long before the bells of the cathedral of St. Sophia were taken down by the Turkish conquerors of Byzantium.

In the year 969, John Tzimisces, the bold and fortunate military chief, assassinated his uncle Nicephorus Phocas and became emperor of the East.

But he could not enjoy his new honours peacefully, for at the foot of the Balkans, only a few days' march from Constantinople, hostile tribes had established themselves. They had come from Russia, countless in numbers, and their hordes flowed unceasingly southward, like a river making its way to the Ægean Sea. John I defeated these heathen invaders, and drove them back. Then, wishing to settle the Eastern Question once for all, he crossed the Bosphorus to deal with the turbulent peoples of Asia Minor. To the king of Armenia he proudly announced his victories in the following terms: "Give ear to and wonder at the marvels which the Lord of Hosts has vouchsafed for our glory and His honour. We have humbled the pride of the Emir Al-Mumerim, the sovereign ruler of African Arabia. . . . Today all Phœnicia, Palestine, and Syria have been freed from the Moslem yoke, and now belong to the Romans. The dominion of the Cross is widening. . . . We have put to the sword whole populations in numberless regions. Along the coasts we burned all the towns and sold the inhabitants into slavery.

Far into the interior of Tripoli we devastated the vineyards, the olive groves, and the gardens. Our armies ravaged the countries for five months, razing everything to the ground. . . . Wherever we went, the enemy gave way before us, shamed, humiliated, and disgraced."

Several hundred years' experience of warfare are requisite before people come to realize that the victors do well to say great things of the vanquished. Not until then do war bulletins declare: "You have defeated the finest troops in the world"—this signifying the finest troops bar us, who have triumphed over them. In other respects, however (making due allowance for changes of form, linguistic conventions, modern proprieties of utterance), all is as it used to be. The conquerors have new principles, new sayings, new truths, new axioms; they hide the nakedness of their interests in a thicket of unctuous phraseology —but the net result, the suffering, the bloody turmoil, the energy of rapine, are unchanged.

On May 15, 1919, nearly a thousand years after the Byzantine emperor John Tzimisces, the Greek army occupies Smyrna. A British admiral informs the Turkish authorities of the town that his allies are about to land, and shows the astonished Mussulmans a document, the Parisian warrant for this step. The Turkish troops are to stay quietly in barracks. The first Greek regiments are standing on the quay, and the order is given for them to march. Their road leads past the barracks, from whose windows armed foes are looking down with mingled curiosity and alarm. A chance shot is fired, and shatters the peace as a stone shatters a mirror. Thousands of Greek rifles have now but one target—the barrack windows. Men fall riddled with bullets, and a panic ensues which is stronger than the wrath of impotence. Hundreds are trampled to death in the narrow passages. A Turkish soldier reaches the barrack gate and waves a white cloth. Ruthlessly, he is bayoneted. At length, after an hour, the conquerors stop their fusillade. The Turks are sent as prisoners to the Greek ships. When they reach their floating prison, some zealous Greek bluejackets fire at a body of captured Turkish officers, and thirty of these are shot down.

Comitadjis proceed with the work of pillage and massacre in the Mohammedan quarter of the town. Nothing but fatigue puts a term to their activities—and then, when they are tired out, they are promptly replaced by fresh levies.

This is the lawless prelude. A systematic and orderly destruction of Asia Minor is to follow. In the eyes of the Greeks, everything there is fit only to be scrapped. "The misery betwixt heaven and earth is like a bellows, which empties itself and yet is not empty, for it opens itself to deliver a new blast. Why so many words?" The last mail from Paris has distributed this vesture of annihilation equably among the vanquished.

Four ministers sitting round a table and looking at a map of Turkey have decided that the principle of nationalities is to be applied to Asia Minor. Since, however, they cannot agree which of them is to send troops, Greece is authorized to do so. Subsequently a commission on the spot will settle details as to boundaries, mutual independence, and so on. After all, what can be simpler than the principle of nationalities? True, before the war, for five hundred years or so, Greeks and Turks have lived together harmoniously, but progress must have its way. Since men are mortal, it is easy to make many into few. The Greeks' idea is to transform themselves into a majority by this straightforward and uncomplicated method: Massacre the Turks. That will solve the problem of nationalities.

But the principle of nationalities thus advocated by the Entente found supporters likewise among those driven out by the conquerors. It seemed to them, however, that there was another essential besides this basic idea. They must have the physical power which would enable them to enforce it. No mere principle can save the vanquished from having to pay the price of defeat.

Kemal was aware of this self-evident fact. But, for that very reason, he knew equally well that immediate resistance would be impossible, would be nothing more than a protest, paper against force.

He knew also that everything has its echo. No one can foresee exactly what the echo will be. That is why, in politics, one must be venturesome.

The Constantinople government, a half-voluntary prisoner of the British commander-in-chief, sends Kemal to Asia Minor. His business is to disperse some Turkish irregulars who are a menace to transport and travel by road and rail. As soon as he lands on the Asiatic shore of the Black Sea, his mind is made up. War against the Greeks! Not for a little while, however, are the adversaries to become cognizant of his resistance; and above all it is imperative that the authorities in Constantinople, who are living tranquilly under British protection, shall not at present be disquieted by the shadow of the coming revolution. Under no illusions concerning the possibilities of his exhausted country, Kemal renounces traditional pan-Turkish and pan-Islamic dreams, breaks away from the romanticism of religious imperialism, and says to himself that the principle of nationalities will have just so much scope as armed force can secure for it. He moves by stages, hiding his aims from the eyes of Europe. Even to the most devoted of his friends and followers he gives no more than a hint of those aims, trusting to the military and political confusion, which is driving towards a solution. In what does his strategy consist? In relying upon the desire of all who are menaced and alarmed to expel the enemy from the country.

This affect must be transmuted into concrete force. Guided by a central energy, it must enter into an alliance with all contingencies, must turn adverse happenings to account, must spur on the social instincts. Consequently the period of greatest national effort in Turkish history coincides with the era of profoundest internal decomposition, of most decisive change.

Remote, now, are the opera-bouffe revolts of Young Turk officers. What was then farce, is now revolution. "If a regeneration of the Turkish Empire is possible," wrote Helmuth von Moltke nearly a hundred years ago in his *Letters on Conditions and Events in Turkey,* "it can only be effected by a generation still to be educated."

A new generation is not, in itself, better than the old, but a change of circumstances can make a new generation even out of elders. In this case minds were transformed by dire necessity.

Whatever is inspired with a determination to resist has migrated from European Turkey to Turkey in Asia. In these changes of a few months, centuries find expression; and the past seems to have reserved itself for effective action today. Kemal is a political propagandist. Against the Greeks in his country he mobilizes the Turkish peasants, for the Greeks are town-dwellers, merchants and shopkeepers, or well-to-do tenant farmers. His banner of the Prophet becomes the banner of an agrarian rising, a symbol of the yearning of the countryman for land of his own. The energy which is directed outwards and is seeking the national enemy, is by him turned inwards by a promise of bread and possessions.

So concrete a policy is an education to his troops, and gives him abundant reserves to draw upon. It conjures up a vision of happiness, which makes people forget the troubles of the moment as they contemplate the promise of the future. To the peasants, he talks of bread; to the intellectuals who flock to his standard from all parts of the distracted empire he talks of influence and power.

He opens a congress of the eastern provinces in Erzerum, forms in Sivas a convention recalling that of the Jacobins, decrees the removal of the national government to Angora, drafts the fundamental law of a constitution. At the same time his diplomacy aims at playing off the rival ambitions of the victorious powers one against another: divulging to the French the secret demands of the British, and to the British those of the French; promising the Russians to introduce bolshevism into Turkey, and in the same breath drawing the attention of the French to the Russian peril. He succeeds in doing what no one has ever done before, inasmuch as the bolsheviks and the French generals alike support him.

While all this is going on, he gains weeks and months in which, behind the scenes, to organize his army. It is a magnificent improvisation, learning to fight in defeat—and that suffices Kemal. For his object is, above all, resistance. The Greek forces penetrate farther into the country, extend their lines more widely, grow more predatory. They seize the railway which connects Angora with the outer world. At length, three years after the world war, in the fight on the Sakaria the Greek advance is checked. A new period of trench warfare seems imminent. Once again the earth is seamed by deep ditches in which live men likely ere long to be no less deeply entombed. But trench warfare is what the Turks have most to dread, for they are cut off from the sea, and the Greeks therefore will be much better supplied with munitions. Hence Kemal is forced to adopt the offensive, and the life of the growing Angora State turns upon the possibility of success in this hazardous venture. Kemal succeeds in breaking through the Greek lines. The way to the sea is open. His entry into Smyrna marks the end of the old Ottoman Empire. He abolishes the sultanate and establishes a national republic. As regards home policy he can now put his cards on the table, for with the defeat of the foreign enemy his domestic adversaries have simultaneously been worsted. He does not, however, become dictator in the sense of one who wields absolutely unrestricted power. A sense of nationality develops; and the Turks, while learning the Latin alphabet, learn at the same time to debate. Cavour declared that he had never ruled so despotically as through parliament.

Maybe in imposing these limitations upon his own power Kemal has been guided by his scepticism, by that scepticism which, during the twenty years of his career, he has applied, not to external things alone, but to himself. "If you are convinced," he once said to a friend, "if you are convinced that you are not great and powerful but small and weak, if you are sure that no one will help you and that to no one can you look for support, then you will in the end overcome all obstacles. When, thereafter, they tell you that you are a great man, you will simply laugh at them."

One Head
Is More Than Three Hundred Voices, or Benedetto Croce in the Senate

CROCE

In the Italian Senate, Croce tried to speak against coming to terms with the Vatican. The words of this Neo-Hegelian were shouted down.

I

FOR decades Benito Mussolini, as a worker in the socialist ranks, was an advocate of the use of force. Before 1914 he strove on behalf of "permanent revolution," just as now he strives on behalf of permanent preparedness for war. The Duce might have begun his autobiography with the words used by Talleyrand for self-characterization: "I have often changed my party, never my opinion." Already before the war Benedetto Croce was writing "against the idols or fetishes which are regarded as sources of good and evil."

At that time in the Socialist Party and in the Italian Senate, Mussolini sustained serious defeats. But in politics, so long as one keeps alive and can still influence social forces, there are no irremediable catastrophes. A statesman might be the stupidest conceivable, but if he were gifted with immortality there would be no escape from entrusting him with the reins of government once or twice a century. It seems highly probable, however, that Mussolini is something more than a mediocre statesman, for he has temperament. And in a democracy, which cannot ignore the opinion of the many who have no time to form one, the politician's inborn disposition and his gestures are more important than his ideas.

The fine façade of the Hotel Chigi looks on the Piazza Colonna. When the sun is shining, the square is resplendent with the tints of vanished papal glories. The peculiar distinction of this architecture uplifts our mood, so that we feel thoroughly clean, even though we be unshaven. Hundreds of young fellows who are ready to regard themselves as the flower of their country are singing songs which promise Italy the hegemony of the world. Rhythmically they shout: "Il duce! Il duce! Il duce!" He appears on the veranda. Power is associated with the veranda, for the leader must be continually in the public eye, must receive incessant homage, must perpetually make his acknowledgments to the crowd in the square. He holds a large red rose in one hand, meditates for a moment, says a few words, and then plucks the flower to pieces. The petals flutter in the wind and sink slowly to the ground. Quoth the Duce: "I love beauty and youth!"

These young fellows whose faces radiate frankness and resolution believe that they have what in truth they lack: freedom, power, dominion. They are impressed by the show of force, by the pageant of dictatorship, as children are impressed by a military band. Feeling rises like a wave. When this huge, cruel, unreasoning beast known as the populace is marching, singing, fighting, or suffering, it needs catchwords more than it needs bread.

The masses, who have to live penuriously and must therefore live by faith in happiness, are the ready prey of those who make glib promises, of commonplace yet cunning spouters, of ready-witted cheats. Yet the masses constitute the foundation of rule. This basis of authority must be kneaded and shaped, must be enslaved. The would-be ruler must know how to please the many and to conceal his true aims. Machiavelli declares that twelve orators are of more use than an army. "The effect of Mussolini's speeches was amazing," writes Benedetto Croce. "Those who paid heed to his words were not merely the discontented, the advocates of the general strike, the men of revolt and the apostles of direct action. In addition there were not a few intellectuals ready to follow him, or at least to take in him that dilettantist interest which is their usual form of tribute."

The dictator is a dictator because he does not buzz about idly but acts as his own demagogue, and is thus able to do the work of twelve orators and an army as well.

Though Mussolini's speeches are in general as simple as a coin which passes from hand to hand, this does not prove that his thought is equally trivial; for he deliberately chooses words suited to achieve a particular purpose, which has been his purpose ever since he came to realize that the masses had gone astray in the wilderness. He understood the futility of the crowd in the public square; he understood that mere rebellion is incompetent to win power and then to reorganize the State; he heard the revolutionists, who had struggled forward to the gateway leading to authority, quarrelling about points of dogma and frenziedly splitting hairs. Mussolini did not utter words of wisdom, did not reason, but shouted madly with the crowd of madmen—while keeping his mind fixed on the goal of power. If you want to gain influence in a lunatic asylum, it will not suffice to show yourself to be as crazy as the others. You must outdo them all in lunacy.

Like any other phenomenon, the "populace" has at all times had its own characteristics, has always manifested qualities which cling to it as the shadow to the substance. But it is likewise a historical product (beginning and end, end and beginning, at once), and is therefore mutable. The determining factor in politics is this essential difference between the masses of yesterday and the masses of today.

In Italy, socialism has dominated the general feeling, has prescribed the general outlook, has been more accordant with the national tradition than has any other political method. Was not Rome in rebellion against the pope for five hundred years? Has not the same rhetorical demand for liberty been thundered from the Capitol century after century? Was not the struggle against the House of Habsburg the perennial conspiracy, the altar on which the dagger of revolt was whetted, the cause on whose behalf men swore to be faithful unto death? Think of Mazzini, of Garibaldi, even of Cavour. But as soon as these yearnings of the Italian nationalists had been fulfilled, socialism presented itself as a new object for the heart's desire. Benedetto Croce tells us that in Italy Marxism has not only held sway over political life, but has been the vehicle of education and has permeated thought, it has been the manna of the poor, the debating ground of the cultured, the favourite topic of the scribes of the daily press.

A political idea which takes possession of the masses cannot live only as a religion, as something to be prayed for. An attempt must also be made to realize it in action. Unless the idols bestow something in response to the petitions of their votaries, they will be neglected or destroyed. But the various conventicles of socialist thought were like barren clouds. They scudded across the Italian skies without condensing into fruitful showers. To the possessing class, socialism was nothing but a menace; to the dispossessed class, nothing but a hope. The fatalistic theory which promises the under-dogs that they shall rise to power as soon as the top-dogs become involved in a crisis, this convenient theory of the class struggle and its inevitable upshot, exists in books, but does not become actual in history. The dispossessed have failed—so far—to enter into their heritage. History has its peculiarities, its surprises, its uniquenesses. The forsaken garden of socialist politics produced vague, novel, unprecedented forms of political life; and from afar, but drawing ever nearer, came the watchwords of those who proclaimed a new paradise—a Land of Promise whose glamour confused the senses of leaders and led. Yet the spirit that animated the fluctuating strata of the townsfolk, the camp-followers of the political parties, the claque of those who are eternally happy in their facile enthusiasm, the noisy mob of persons ever ready to cry "up" with this and "down" with that and the other—this spirit was unchanged. The will-to-power which, during years and decades of propaganda, the advocates of socialism had aroused in the hearts of those whose lives were one long servitude; the efforts of a rare and silent heroism; the idealism of a faith in which the diversities of a whole nation found expression, and thanks to which despair gave place to inviolable confidence, thanks to which verdure sprouted upon the stony ground of the life of the masses: all these persisted, and their fruit was harvested by Benito Mussolini.

II

A dictator of the old style, one stepping down from the heights of aristocracy and distinction, in accordance with the traditional models, to tame and lead Demos, would have been impossible. A latter-day dictator of Italy had to be trained in the school of socialism. That is the heart-rending tragedy in which a hope cherished by millions has become involved; that is the most terrible defeat which an idea has ever sustained. In the end, however, reality triumphs over good and evil. It has no dramatic sense, is more reasonable than reason, harmonizes the ancient contradictions; for it is in its development always in need of new things, is judge of the supreme court, determines every trend, is as omnipotent as God.

"When military forces represent universal tendencies," writes Leopold von Ranke, "one battle can decide the future of the world."

Not until after the encounter, not until the battle has been fought and won, do we know which side was "right" and which "wrong." Our wisdom can guide us only as to the past. Mussolini's rise to power must represent universal trends, or he would not be where he is today. May it not be that he is the embodiment of the only possible form to which socialism in Italy could give birth? He differs, you say, from the original revelation. The *Communist Manifesto* gave a different prophecy. Agreed! But which is more accordant with Marx's writings, the rule of Stalin in Muscovy or the non-rule of Hermann Müller in Germany? The fascist dictatorship is based upon the same socialist forces as those which the theory and practice of socialism have for the last four decades been organizing in the trade unions. The millions of members of the fascist unions, with their thousands of permanent officials, constitute the living reality of the new order. In this alliance between fascism and the proletariat, liberty has been strangled. She passed quietly away, without even a rattle in the throat. But what is liberty? "Freedom that exists only for the supporters of a government, only for the members of a party, however numerous they may be," writes Rosa Luxemburg, "is no freedom at all. Freedom must always be freedom of dissent." This sort of freedom is no more granted by the adepts of the Muscovite faith than it is granted by Benito Mussolini. Lenin regarded it as an exhalation from the catacombs of the bourgeoisie. Is it not, indeed, in all places where team-work has to be carried out, reckoned an undesirable manifestation of independent thought and held to be marked with the stigma of barren querulousness? The same sort of officials are to be found in proletarian hierarchies as in those of ordinary States. The apostles of proletarian self-government, the heirs of remote rebellions, the epigones of philosophies which are timeworn though worldwide, are more hostile to doubt and dissent than are the permanent officials of State institutions, who often try to irrigate with kindliness the arid garden they have to tend. The legatees of revolutionary ideas, provided with comfortable quarters for their work, sure of their salaries, and armed with their dogmas, become double-dyed routinists with no more initiative than a provincial who lives at ease upon a moderate income from the funds. Scratch many a revolutionist and you will find a petty bourgeois. The bureaucracy of the collectivists procreates dictatorship as the fine flower of intellectual sloth; and thereafter, from the altitude of their limitations, the dictators look down upon lesser mortals with compassionate disdain.

Popular philosophy, ever optimistic, regards the "bad old days" as dead for ever, merged with the infinite past, buried in the eternity of the tomb. It points enthusiastically to quasi-inspired leaders who promise a golden future. But the real world is something very different from an easy ride out of unhappiness into happiness. The life of the past quickens in new forms and demands rebirth as the present. At the close of the democratic era we can re-echo the words which Chateaubriand penned at its inception, after two decades of war and revolution: "It is the fashion of the day to greet with Homeric laughter any mention of liberty, which is looked upon as fit only for the scrap-heap. I cannot follow this fashion, and I care not at all if I am alone in my refusal. I am able to fight Napoleon with something much greater than he—with liberty."

III

To rebel against a system, to show that it has lost its charm, to overthrow statues, to enhearten the vanquished, to arouse new faith—these activities do not furnish proof that the political order which is being attacked is "wrong," or "unjust." The extant state of affairs has its disagreeables, no doubt, but at any rate they are familiar. Why should a philosopher strive to make an end of it in order to replace it by a new state of affairs whose disagreeables are unknown? "Better to bear the ills we have . . ." May not unfamiliar ills prove worse? Benedetto Croce, however, is prepared to run this risk because it lies in the nature of thought to be dissatisfied, and to find repose nowhere but in the movement of unresting criticism and in the shaping of new things. Thought is a reflexion of realities, of existing circumstances; but at the same time it has a life of its own. It remains incorruptible when its lord and master—the sinful flesh—yields to temptation. Yet reason, too, has its peculiar foible: a lust for consistency. Rebellion begins with the underground work of the intellectuals. Not until they have prepared the way comes the massed rebellion of ordinary mortals. Every change is, to begin with, understood only by the few. What reason has grasped must then be carried into effect by fools, savages, those who are half-beasts, those who fancy themselves "free" when with impunity they can strike down any who hold conflicting views. But even the mechanism of change (which means the power of mental receptivity coupled with the material energies of coming events) is wrapped in a dark cloud which hides the novel with old words, and with concepts that have ceased to represent realities.

Political being is transformed, but there has been no corresponding change in political philosophy.

The most fundamental rebellion in history, the glorified god who yesterday was a splendid dawn —socialism—has conquered on the world stage. True, those who have triumphed will not admit it. Like clever men grown to be celebrities, they would fain be successful, much talked of, and still numbered among the oppressed, lest they should forfeit their charm. Under various shades, in diverse forms, socialism has won through to victory, appearing in Russia as the bolshevik revolution, in Italy as the fascist dictatorship, in Germany and Britain under traditional legal forms. The Muscovite brand of Marxism, à la sauce asiatique, claims (like the bishop of Rome) to be the one true Church, forgetting that elsewhere in Europe, no less than in the land of the Soviets, proletarian organizations are tending more and more to be the foundation of all government, and the school from which statesmen of all shades of opinion are recruited.

After every realization of political aims there comes a brief period of exultation, inevitably followed by a relapse into sobriety. Still, even though socialism be no longer a splendid promise, and can no longer be depicted in glowing colours as a beautiful vision of the future, it has given much to the world. It has become history just as in their time did Catholicism, Protestantism, and the French revolution. Collective man rules us all today; and thought, if it is to remain revolutionary, must enter upon its own difficult, heroic, solitary path. Opposition has now become a matter for individuals; it is no longer a party concern. Henceforward only individuals will speak. Individuals alone, paying no heed to the resolutions passed by bodies organized to reform the world, will without prejudice utter their "No," their "Yes," or their "Perhaps."

In the Italian Senate, one man only has attempted this—Benedetto Croce.

The collective bellowing of collective man, who, after painfully learning the alphabet, has made such progress as to be able to read the newspapers, could not affright this Neapolitan disciple of Hegel. His philosophy dissolves hatred in understanding. Sovereign thought must act in accordance with its nature, without hope of paradise. Croce does not recognize any period of decay. There comes "only dissolution, which is rebirth. The thread does not wear thin, but moves to a new place and finds new connexions. There is nothing evil or hateful. Things are either hidden and hindered, or manifest, unhampered, harmoniously ordered; or we may say that their true hierarchy is a purposive activity."

That is why Croce looks to the individual as the source of power. The individual is the central energy, the perennial object of history. For this Roman senator, the wealth of the world is to be found in its "reflective human beings." For him, they are "the true gold-reserves of the nation."

This quality, ever threatened by quantity but never overcome, is borne onward by the stream of time, and in due course gains a multitude of supporters. Then the torches of reformation flame. But in the moment of victory, triumphant quality is sent into exile, becomes a solitary wanderer once more, listening from afar to a vague and mysterious call. In due time fresh adherents are gained; another triumph comes, followed by another period of banishment. Thus does quality, ardently desirous, and always reconciled to a hostile world, unremittingly seek and perhaps never find the motive forces of contradiction.

The "Moderns" and Their Adversary,

G. K. Chesterton

CHESTERTON

I

SILVERIO was a holy man and was chary of words. He ardently desired to understand all that happened, and it was only this impulse which made it possible for him to go on living. His sermons were short. To the most devoted of his adherents, he would vouchsafe no more than two sentences. The first was: Books and conversations seldom furnish us with clear ideas. The second: Nothing is commoner than to read, to write, and to talk, aimlessly and inanely.

When Silverio was seated in the retirement of his cell following up a thought without prejudice and without restrictions—as one alone in a garden will follow with his eyes the flight of a bird—ghosts would come knocking at the door and would fill his mind with images. He would see the little republics of the ancient world, determined to build and to rule for all eternity; the truce of God proclaimed by Roman pontiffs in a compassionate endeavour to make Christians join hands in fellowship; the glad tidings uttered by fervent Jacobins. From these half-finished temples of earlier days, the ideals of mankind trickled down to Silverio.

To every creature able to glimpse the distant stars which will continue to shine comfortingly upon mortals, come the visions that came to this saint. If one much afflicted says, "Yes, I will," they all laugh in chorus. They laugh because a being who has made so many efforts, who has shown so much diligence and has maintained so vigorous an impetus without reward, has still courage to seek a goal.

The canticle of dreams will continue to be sung, despite all failures to realize them, for life thrusts aside the profoundest contemplation, that which makes us curse or deride the vast and motley tapestry of existence. When melancholy overpowers us so that we turn away in despair from the wonders of the day or the night, it is only because we are ailing and therefore sigh. The world is as young as it was in the days of creation. But the canticle has changed its melody, and dictates a new Book of Proverbs. The change is not capricious. The canticle still has the ring of vigorous activity, voices the rhythm of the most decisive, the most transformative influences.

In the nineteenth century, the new leit-motif of the eternal requiem was called "progress." During the quietude of three centuries, this idea of philosophers, beggarmen, utopists, and poets was dreamed, fabled, prophesied. Descartes's *Meditations* already speak of what is coming. "My speculations," he writes shortly after the peace of Westphalia, "have shown me that it is possible to obtain knowledge which will enable us to become precisely acquainted with the power and the effect of fire, water, air, the stars."

The realization of the forecast has been the story of the last three hundred years. With its giant arms, that realization has embraced every village and every human being; continually arousing new expectations; moving the oars of boats launched on the sea of wishes; filling May nights with charm and tinting the clouds of eventide with hope; helping us to meet criticisms and conquer difficulties; and inspiring today the enthusiasm for technical advance which unites all classes and nations. "The great entrepreneur," writes Carl Schmitt, "has the same ideal as Lenin, an electrified world. What both are looking for is merely the best method of electrification. American financiers and Russian bolsheviks are united in the struggle to think in economic terms."

One who refuses to bow the knee before this new god, builder of railways, mover of State landmarks, and preserver of tinned milk; one who regards him with indifference or rails against him; one who shows how his products condemn men and women to pine in the shadow of the great wheels that turn unceasingly; one who laughs to scorn the fancy that herewith mankind has climbed to unprecedented heights—is deemed a utopian rebel and stigmatized as a Luddite. Such a negator sets himself apart from the species, and is a living paradox.

II

In the comfortable arm-chair of "progress," of "achievement," of "modernity," the intellectuals become short-winded; and even the most gifted among them finds that arguments are hard to come by. That is why Bernard Shaw, the ablest spokesman for the defence of men yet unborn, that is to say of the future, has become a jester. What was left open to him but to assemble all the witty possibilities to be discovered in the limited space of "progress." "Bernard Shaw," says Chesterton, "never gives his opinions a holiday; he is never irresponsible, even for an instant." Chesterton, on the other hand, proclaims himself inconstant. With strong feeling he declares that one cannot be serious for three hundred years. There must be scope for frivolity even in the Temple of the Ages; Zion must be a place where we are allowed to be at ease, unless we are contemplating no more than a flying visit.

Chesterton sees in Shaw, in the "Plays for Puritans," the victory of the rational, the bookish, conduct of life; the triumph of the professional idea; the categorical imperative of "efficiency." Religious asceticism having escaped from the quiet monastic cell of medieval faith, has become a business ideal, and seeks to reconstruct the economic world. The passion which could outsoar all obstacles, the piety which (hiding the natural emptiness of the creature) linked the individual with the object of his yearning, have become a means of livelihood for the ambitious expert.

History has transformed one affect into another.

The professional expert must always do his "best," but this best is not the very best, not even the second or third best. Not until he is loosed from the bondage of ambition, of the search for a livelihood, does man (a living chaos) really begin to exist. It is in his absurdities, his blood-and-thunder novels, his romanticism, his contradictions, his tastes, and his lusts, that his true life unfolds itself. Chesterton takes up his residence in the primeval forest of these trifles, by the light of the full moon contemplates these absurdities, which are intertangled like fantastic tree-tops. That is why he is never afraid of holding the same opinion as his cook or his next-door neighbour. What cares he that his quips and counter-quips were current among the greybeards and grandmothers of centuries back? He can answer with a cudgel, saying: What have you done, you men who stare into the future? You have promised the joys of paradise; your cotton was to make fine clothes for us to wear on innumerable holidays; the New Jerusalem was to be a source of endless life. So far, however, all you have done is to drive the poor man out of the hospitable shelter which was extended to him of old, assuring him as you did so that his unprotected place in the rain was on the highway to progress. You talked of property and destroyed it. Rothschild and Rockefeller are the greatest enemies of property because they are the foes of their own restrictions. They want, not only their own land, but other people's land as well. You give "reforms" which cost you nothing, and expect them to be received with a hymn of thankfulness. For instance, you bestow the boon of "free love," for which, however, free time is indispensable. A postman has not even time to love his own wife.

What is left over to us as a legacy from the Middle Ages, the home, is the only oasis of freedom in this world of compulsions and regulations. Here the common man can cover the floor of his little house with carpets bought on the hire system, here he can indulge his maddest whims, luxuriate in his own folly.

Folly is as picturesquely coloured as are the masks at carnival. Chesterton, being a serious thinker, plays with folly, from very delight in the forms of being. He defends many things which are commonly despised, without insisting that he has an opinion of his own, but he usually has one for all that. There is no human action from which folly can be excluded, for folly is the individual element, is the originality that distinguishes one human being from another.

Chesterton, who sees the human turmoil in the twilight of the past, will have no truck with the troubadours of radical "innovations," seeing that all their criticisms and all their slogans debouch into the channel of that "progress" he disdains, holding it accountable for most of our troubles. "Towards the end of the nineteenth century there appeared its two incredible figures; they were the pure conservative and the pure progressive; two figures which would have been overwhelmed with laughter by any other intellectual commonwealth of history."

May it not be that the libraries in which he seeks the explanation of whatever happens have paralysed his capacity for accepting any positive solution? When he wants to define a phenomenon, does he not lose himself among mere preliminary remarks? Is he not a dreamer, like Shaw, only under another sign? Having accurately observed a certain number of isolated facts, and no more, does not he arbitrarily construct out of them a world in which he feels "at ease"? Perhaps. But he functions as the pole of unprejudiced negation, and has no reason to fear that, next week, he will be summoned to guide the destinies of the British Empire. In general, an author has a positive programme in one of his pockets. Who can tell? Maybe tomorrow he will have to assume "responsibility." This universal positive, however, has an extremely negative effect, for no one is more widely dreaded than an irresponsible eccentric. The rational and the economic have drawn writers together into warring companies; Chesterton on one side and Bernard Shaw on the other fight as franc-tireurs. Chesterton strays anarchically in the forsaken garden of lost things, and rekindles extinct stars, using them to illuminate forgotten plains.

III

The negator is not content with negation. He hates something, rejects something, otherwise he would not say "No." But every "No" presupposes a yearning, a "Yes." Chesterton discovers his affirmation a long way back, in the thirteenth century.

The city republics of the Middle Ages; their inhabitants' love for their own town, a love which was conjoined with a longing for the universal; the incense of ritual sacraments; priestly discipline, prayer and contemplation; sympathy with man who had lost his way and was trying to find himself; veneration for the idealized poverty of the monks of the mendicant orders; the resignation and serenity of the individual life; the merciful deeds of Francis of Assisi, who wanted to melt the glaciers of selfishness; the labours of that warlike age which, notwithstanding so many internal and external struggles, created philosophers, parliaments, universities, churches, laws—the aroma of these distant realities is what enriches the present for Chesterton.

Tears for a vanished world are rebellion, no less than sighs for a world yet to come. This rebellion on behalf of the past is not more definite, not clearer, not less ambiguous than rebellion on behalf of the future, for the past is wrapped in the dreams of children and of pundits. Our knowledge of the past is but a text for commentators. History is a book on whose pages so many generations have written their glosses, that even with the aid of a good lens much of the original text remains indecipherable. Do we, indeed, understand the symbols which those of past ages employed to express their truths? Is their terminology comprehensible to us? When a modern savant is lecturing on matter, energy, motion, atoms, and molecules, he seems to know about as much and about as little as did Paracelsus when writing of macrocosm and microcosm, of the astrum and the quintessence. The only certain thing we know of the past is that at all times one who reflected too deeply concerning himself must (like Pascal) have felt himself to be newly awakened upon a barren and uninhabited islet in a far-off sea.

Nevertheless, Chesterton's yearning for the thirteenth century is no mere yearning for cloudland. It is a rebellion against the danger of mechanical petrifaction, a vision of the past arising to confront the giant wheels of the present. It is a flourish of trumpets to herald a renaissance whose forms are slowly shaping themselves. Such a renaissance is not impossible. The rebirth of old thoughts and old ideals is something very different from reaction in the political sense of that term. The Jacobins declared that they were imitating Sparta, and Napoleon believed himself a

Charlemagne. Rebirth has oftened lightened the darkness of the present. This longing must be the expression of a vital necessity, for otherwise it could never inspire enthusiasm. Chesterton is not a thing self-existent in the void; he needs a publisher, readers, compositors, the butcher, the baker, and the candlestick-maker. Perhaps he expresses the hidden wishes of them all when he fulminates against modernity.

Panaït Istrati, or Romance about Byzantium

ISTRATI

I

HISTORY is interwoven with fiction. The love of story-telling and the passion for the absurd enlarge life, inasmuch as the incredible is the only miraculous. In the endless galleries of the human mind, in the libraries where the books stand side by side like skulls in the labyrinth of a catacomb, the volumes which last longest are those in which dreams build a world, those wherein castles, scenery, and women are decked in the trappings of the imagination. The Odyssey of the Greeks and the Thousand and One Nights of the Moslems tell of entirely unreasonable hours; they riot in illusion, glitter, and peril. The adjacent volumes of the philosophers can see in this charmed unrest nothing but the eternal curse which plagues mankind, creating discontent, and sending forth upon the quest of the future even those who declare themselves fond lovers of the past.

The past they are in love with is racy of the soil, springing from its furrows like language, which is always of peasant origin and rises from amid the grain like the bird's warble.

Nature is interwoven with history; gives history its tints; lets us hear the purling of streams in the flow of events; spreads beneath the feet of the actors on its stage the warm carpet of oriental landscapes; makes sultans, janissaries, and water-carriers luxuriate in the voluptuous breath of hot summer nights and in the brightness of sunlit days; sets the arched heaven of Byzantium above the Bosphorus, the Ægean, the Balkans, and even the gloomy lowlands of Wallachia. Here, as elsewhere, the old do not care to look at themselves in the glass, which shows them their faces as they are and not as they used to be. But when the old tell stories you would think, sometimes, that they are holding a magic mirror which has power to bring back all that time has stolen, all that the fleeting seasons have destroyed or disfigured. They tell of the Byzantium of the Crescent, of the rule of dead sultans whose power surpassed that of any monarch in Christendom. Fate issued from the Bosphorus. To the masses it seemed that their despots were indistinguishable one from another, having always the same unchanging countenance. Might was impersonal, incomprehensible, formless, boundless—like the simoon in the desert, which confuses men's senses and leaves them stretched lifeless on the ground. In a palace of white marble casting its shadow on the sea as palm trees cast their shadows on the sand, throned on a huge pile of many-hued cushions, sits the sultan keeping watch over his realm; perennially the same sultan. "But from time to time he goes to the hall of government, and the troops and the vizier enter, the ruler appoints and dismisses, issues orders and prohibitions, until the day draws to its close." To these simple folk the power of the ruler in Byzantium seemed undiminished at a time when it had withered, and was passing as mutely, as inexplicably, as it had come. The memory of it lived on as a tradition, taking the form of an oriental garden filled with desires, songs watered with tears, kings' sons, prisoners pining from love unfulfilled, swallows galore, parrots not a few, and ponds upon whose surface the lotus flowers floated. There were sighs for injured innocence, compassion for beauty carried into captivity, and warm affection for the hero who came to the rescue. The morality of thralls inspired legends critical of the pleasures which poor folk could not buy; and fables recounted wonders about the costliness of polygamy and the corruption that prevailed in high places.

In a dream the man without possessions sees the splendours of wealth, and thinks to himself how sweet a smell he too could have were but the unguents of the great lord made common property. All have the same wants, but not all have the same opportunities for satisfying them; the eastern sun has aroused the same longings in all those whose skins are bronzed by its rays. The thrall, moreover, draws an income from his poverty—a consolation derived from the hope that ultimately justice will prevail.

"Once only" (thus does Panaït Istrati's robber captain fulminate in the vizier's palace) "does man live on earth. The world is ours, and God has created it for us. Ours the sun's rays, the vine's juice, and the sheep's flesh. Ours, too, the pine woods. For us, the shepherdesses with breasts made firm by life in the open air. But woe unto you who grasp more than you can bite off with the two rows of your teeth! God will send the plague into your palaces, will free the prisoners from your strongholds, and will burn your gorgeous towns."

The bandit who, disguised as a monk from Mount Athos, flits in these tales from castle to castle seeking vengeance, sets fire to a pasha's palace. The nobles of Turkey were independent rulers like the princes of the Holy Roman Empire; they heaped up mounds of piastres; in Damascus, Rumelia, Wallachia, and Serbia, they amassed fabulous wealth, treasures which, even to the owners, seemed incredibly vast; in Macedonia they were oil-factors, in Bulgaria sheep-factors, in Moldavia grain-factors; they maintained thousands of underlings, defied the sultan, sharked up bands of ruffians and outlaws who devastated the countryside and besieged the towns. The sultan, like his predecessor the Roman emperor in Byzantium, was wont to take foreign nations into his pay that they might defend him against his own grandees; and not infrequently he arranged that conquered territories should be ruled by Christians trained for the purpose in Stamboul—Christians who, though they worshipped another heavenly god than Allah, paid allegiance to the same earthly god as their Mussulman fellow-subjects.

II

The little towns of the vanquished Balkan regions absorbed the foreign elements as the ground sucks in water after rain. The Levantine immigrants could not effect any fundamental change in the nature of existing circumstances, but they amplified the general tenor of life while the motley nets of destiny continued to hold the mishmash of races together. In the trading cities and the seaports, the confusion of tongues was such that one might have fancied oneself among the disconcerted builders at Babel. But the descendants of the foreign immigrants were native-born persons who had lost exotic strangeness, so that there remained no more than puddles to bear witness to the great inundation. The vigorous forces of national transformation assimilated the wealthy among the strangers, while herding the camp-followers into coast-towns—ghetto-like, with streets that were narrow, dark, and unpaved. The poor, lured into distant places by the mirage of hope, tend ever in their new homes to reproduce the old poverty.

Out of this coloured patchwork of penury; out of this medley of the passions felt by those who, setting forth to find heaven, had found only the mire of the streets; out from among the various lesser races which tow in the wake of history; from amid the polychrome rags of beggars; out of this rhythm of men and things that fade, when evening comes, into one grey and pitiful mass—speaks Panaït Istrati, who, describing the various strains that have been mingled to form his personality, writes: "On to my mother's family, in the Rumanian line, three races were grafted, the Turkish, the Russian, and the Greek, corresponding to the three nations which had of yore ruled the land."

Statistics are incompetent to demonstrate these past embraces, to show forth the interplay of natural racial forces; none but the literary artist can, in ways that elude his own understanding, give them adequate expression. His pages then become an echo of remote days, of hours born long since from the womb of time or eternity but now buried in the grave of oblivion; they bring us reverberations from the hovels, the taverns, and the quays where men and women who have mouldered into dust used to dwell and to drink, to work and hold converse. Therein lies the profound significance of Panaït Istrati. His tales come from the primeval forest of the unknown, and that is why they enrich our common humanity. In Bagdad, Smyrna, and Constantinople, sit elderly men at the street corners, near the mosques, or in front of the bazaar, hunched over desks—professional letter-writers, ready for a few paras to indite for all and sundry among the illiterate a love epistle or a friendly missive. Thus, in like manner, did Panaït Istrati pen for an astonished Europe his stories about the troubles of the common folk who are his characters. He writes fairy-tales, wheels within wheels, each story pregnant with another, and each recounting wonderful adventures, though they are the adventures of persons of no moment. We are credulous mortals, and the poorest among us console themselves with an optimism which shines on the world of their fancy as the sun rises morning after morning to shine on the sea.

There are two different ways of writing books. Some of us grow grey as we work peacefully in libraries, taking volume after volume down from the shelves, sifting their contents laboriously, washing the auriferous dust and rejecting what is of no use to us, until the glittering particles of gold that will alone serve our turn are all that remain to be refashioned into "our own" book—which another, in due course, will subject to the cradling and sifting process once more. Others tramp the streets, rub shoulders with the crowds that throng the fairs, and are always on the alert, ready to "pinch" from fellow-wayfarers, not indeed purse or pocketbook, but face and feelings, for transfer to the written page. That is the way of Panaït Istrati, whose first home was the public street.

As portrayed by the writer of these tales, poverty has something besides the greyness which is manifest to all beholders. The whole world vibrates in it, as in an atom. For the lad, the street means freedom, a freedom he fights lustily to win. He is cruel, mischievous, almost naked, hungry; he steals bread and apples, loafs in the sunshine, thrashes and is thrashed. Here sensibility acquires a memory; here the poor learn life, just as the children of the well-to-do learn the alphabet out of a spelling-book. There is no privacy in the sordid little dwellings whose gardens are only separated one from another by low trellis-work fences. Every one keeps watch on his neighbours, people eyeing one another with inquisitive unfriendliness. The very houses shout information and pry upon each other's doings. Words and garbage are flung into the street as if it were an open sewer. Into the narrows of this existence love thrusts itself like a fever, like the odour of an unknown fruit; a love which is as little platonic as is wine when one is simply athirst, but a love which none the less kindles the torches of romance.

III

The East is an invitation to travel. When captains who have never shouted orders to a sailor, have never had a ship under their command, spin yarns about lost treasure, distant voyages, and evenings full of delight, it is easy for the boy (who serves them with wine and who slaves from early morn till late at night) to forget his dread of the host's heavy fist, and to long for Damascus, Constantinople, or Smyrna. Here, he is often overwhelmed with despair; there, things will go well with him. How to get there? Freedom he can have for the taking, but where can he lay hands on money for the journey? Yet what greater security, what more boundless wealth, can there be than to sit on the shore, cut loose from the ties which bind people in general? The sea is as quiet as a millpond. Contemplating it he seems delivered from the perishable, and all but the final resolve is as easy as can be. One to the manner born can visit every harbour, valley, and river of the East, if only he merges his individuality in the crowd. "Thus you will find entry through all doors, which are closed against those who try to open them by force."

Mingling with the throng, the lad lets himself be carried away by the stream. Hundreds of emigrants are waiting for a ship. He waits with the others—and goes on board with the others. Not until long after the port of shipment has vanished amid the fading outlines of the coast, is the stowaway discovered, the thief who has stolen nothing but his place on the steamer. When next the vessel touches land, he is put ashore. Panaït Istrati has gained his end. He is in Naples.

What will be the upshot?

When the Caliph Ibn al Shabb went for a walk one day beside the Golden Horn, he rolled himself a cigarette and found he had no means of lighting it. He glanced over the water, and beheld on the farther shore a man who sat there staring laconically into the depths. The caliph, in jest, shouted the familiar inquiry, "Can you oblige me with a light?" Thereupon the stranger, taking a hand out of his pocket, made a long arm across the channel to offer the smoker a burning brand. The man who had been asked for a light was the devil, who is often most obliging.

Such marvels happen only in the East. Fatalism is an exalted mood, and the fatalist therefore cannot be content with reason alone, inasmuch as, though the outer wrappings of every phenomenon are easy to explain, the core is still a marvel, like light and life and death. For the oriental, the East ends at Naples, but here for the westerner it begins. Though there are many more night-refuges in the West than in the East, life is harder here than there, since among us the right to be lazy is denied. In Naples there is so keen a competition among the beggars, that Panaït Istrati soon found himself longing to be back in the heaven of Byzantium.

This atmosphere of the past, the repose of this landscape, are disturbed only by individual curiosity, which raises its head and troubles the dreams of the East. The spirit surfeited with fairy-tales craves for pictures of another kind of life. Beggars go forth into the world, youths from this mishmash of the nations, thoughtful vagabonds. Few reach their goal, many turn back, and one of them has tales to tell concerning the alley-ways and the peoples of the East.

Hans Delbrück, or
The Historian Conquers the Specialist

DELBRÜCK

THE astronomer who wants to calculate the movements of distant bodies cannot fly to Mars, but must be content to obtain his data by the use of earthly telescopes. So, in like manner, the historian is debarred from seeing with his own eyes the battle of Marathon or the assassination of Julius Cæsar. He has to reconstruct the objective details; he cannot directly observe them. The more causes he takes into account and the more critical his investigation, the more accurately will he be able to sketch the fundamental lineaments of reality. The poor fellow tests fact after fact, rejoices at the discovery of new texts, pores over collections of forgotten documents, only to find at last, to his despair, that in every happening there is an inexplicable residuum which is perhaps the thing that matters most. He is racked with anxiety. Is it so? Does the very matter he cannot account for constitute the basic core of undiscoverable truth? Could he but unriddle the riddle, would not his problem be solved? All research is a hunt for such residua. For the theologian Cornelius Jansen, whose doctrines were in the seventeenth century the inspiration of the brilliant school of Port-Royal, the struggle for the residuum was the Christian's first duty. Ten times had he read the writings of St. Augustine, haunted day and night by this one thought. When he walked in the garden of the monastery school, the same unrest pursued him. Sighing he would stretch his hands heavenward, and his pupils, deeply moved, would overhear his agonized exclamation: "O truth! O truth!" Some truths he already possessed: mercy, humility, devotion; but the residuum, the residuum which should close the circle in order to make his knowledge complete, vanished like a wraith at the moment when he hoped to grasp it.

The long-suffering historian comes to believe in a providence that masters things and guides them; that does not merely create bodies, but moves them along appointed paths. Thus the historian projects into the outer world his most keenly felt emotions. He would fain light the globe with the lamp of his own writing-table. In this way the remote god becomes (as Sainte-Beuve phrased it) an illusion of perspective. Providence heals the wounds which his inability to solve the enigmas of history has inflicted upon the tortured mind of the investigator. Another function of providence is to give a meaning to the contradictions which are apparent in the objective concatenations of history. God is spirit, and therefore history is the radiation of God's thoughts. After half a century of active work as a historian, Leopold von Ranke, who possessed so unrivalled a power of imaginative insight that he had been able to understand conflicting and self-determining epochs, apostrophized God in the fifty-fourth volume of his collected works: "Almighty, One and Three-in-One, Thou calledst me out of Nothing, and here I prostrate myself before the steps of Thy Throne!"

The god who had moved and guided him must also be the motive force and the guide of history. For Ranke, States, phases of development, revolutionary changes, were "original creations of the human mind, one might say God's thoughts."

Providence, the source of these moral energies, binding them and loosing them by turns, uses the historian as its interpreter and plays arbitrarily with its own abstract laws. It must be omnipresent, for otherwise it is nowhere. It is on the balcony from which the King's Majesty watches the Massacre of St. Bartholomew, and it is also in the rooms of the victims; it dwells in Cæsar's camp, and accompanies Constantine when he sees the cross in the sky; it is in the baggage of Ludendorff's general staff and in that of Foch's as well. It behaves like a double traitor, for it accepts the gratuity of prayer from both sides, enjoying the Te Deum sung by both and yet in the end giving victory to one only of the contending parties. Or are we to suppose that it has no concern with small matters, and holds sway over great ones alone? Maybe it does not decide the chances of every battle, does not prescribe the fortunes of every day and hour, does not guide the missiles of every quick-firing gun—but is content to declare majestically once in five hundred years or so: "What has happened hitherto, has happened in accordance with my will, for you mortals are but riffraff performing a carnival play." Or is providence nothing more than an expedient of the historians, who, carried away by professional zeal, think the world must have been created in order to give them something to explain?

When the historian seeks laws which can guide him to final results (so that with an easy conscience he can write "Finis" at the end of his five hundred pages), he generally discovers efficient and even omnipotent causes. Misled by the fervour of his orthodoxy, he tends to ignore the vacillating, the unstable, the vague, the unforeseen. Yet if we arrange for a hundred persons who believe in the same god, read the same books, and contemplate the same landscape, to grow up under the same geographical, climatic, and economic conditions, they will not become all alike. One among them will excel the rest. Why, then, should we expect that in history, which is the history of human beings, different results should not ensue from exposure to the same environment, to the same economic conditions? For what reason in history, more than elsewhere, should the subjecting of diverse beings to similar conditions produce uniform results? The documents and archives which a man leaves behind him, the contents of the portfolio which is erroneously supposed to contain an adequate portrait, are but black marks upon white paper, no more characteristic and of no more lasting significance than the imprints of his feet upon damp ground. The seconds that form a human being are as imperceptible as the uninterrupted but slight oscillations of inspiration and expiration. The real man is the man no one can see, and real history is history no one can relate.

This idea is able to bring historiography to a standstill. Amid the abysses of doubt that yawn all round him, the historian is afraid to venture a single movement. His hair stands on end; the gloomy light of an eternity of nothingness filters through his windows; he is chilled to the bone. He has, so to say, been struck by a fist between the eyes, and he sees stars, which he mistakes for the stars of heaven.

But scepticism is only one element of thought, and its presuppositions are positive. Quite as many blockheads are fooled by doubt as by credulity. Scepticism often torments us, but it does not dissolve the outer world into nonentity. Disciplining in our brains the advocates of unqualified negation, it becomes a helpful method of criticism. In persons of strong fibre, it bears abundant fruit. This is what happened in the case of Leopold von Ranke. He accepted and took along with him the vacillating, the unstable, the vague, the unforeseen. That was why he never deduced the condition of the world from geographical or economic conditions alone, from general causal connexions, from a restricted number of rationalistic axioms. This most tolerant of all historians, this reconstructor of dead lives, was ever on the watch for the peculiarities, the uniquenesses, of things and trends, was unwearying in his search for the full significance of all happenings; and when he had recourse to providence as an explanation, it was not because he was clutching at an expedient, but because he wished to include every possibility. The historical world grew for him continually richer, and each newly discerned cause was but a door opening on to causes still to be elucidated. For him the past was an ocean full of undiscovered islands. From each voyage he returned with unexpected treasures. Since he did not confine himself to abstractions, did not merely try to conjure up things out of concepts, and yet, being in love with concepts, abstractions, and ideas, never dreamed of repudiating them—Ranke deduced from conditions and ideas the unity of all that lives. In bold formulation he wrote: "The spiritual reality which suddenly presents itself to you in unimagined originality cannot be inferred from any higher principle." Nonetheless the historian suffers from the weakness which affects so many writers of fiction; in the end the ideal and the material "get one another" like the hero and the heroine of romance. The spiritual exists because no power can maintain itself by force alone, any more than acts of violence can be looked upon as necessarily indications of strength. Ranke's "spiritual reality" has the impetus of Ranke's own soul. "Great forces," he says, "move onward by their inherent momentum until they encounter a resistance . . . power which, once hindered, must grow unceasingly because it cannot estimate the oppositions it has to overcome."

For Ranke, these historical concepts were not the starting-point but the goal of the inquiry. He did not give a mere recital of events, nor did he succumb to the speculative fever of the historian, but sketched the mechanical elements of all decisions—though by no means after the manner of the official statistician. He writes: "Amid the struggles of power and of ideas, it would be impossible not to form opinions about them, and all the time we can preserve the essence of impartiality, for impartiality consists in this, that we recognize the active forces in their several positions, and allow for the relationships peculiar to each." That was the spirit in which he studied history, always endeavouring to grasp the interconnexions of reality. That was the spirit in which he created his tranquil picture of the universe of thought and feeling.

To Ranke, as to every man whose ways of thinking and feeling are original, the band of enthusiastic epigones, the "school" of his admirers and imitators, was a nuisance. The disciple is a caricature of the master, a self-satisfied chewer of cuds, an intolerant fanatic bending over books, one whose mind is stuffed with borrowed phrases. He is the barking watchdog that makes far more noise than the wealthy owner of the establishment. The pupil is magnetically attracted to the debatable points which are necessary parts of every doctrine and every method, and it is these especially which he feels called upon to defend. No matter whether they be adherents of Ranke, of Marx, or of Kant, they always give the impression of raw recruits on the drill-ground. Pupils, having espoused a doctrine, can only move freely within its framework when, from the known elements revealed by the system, they argue to the unknown and thus enlarge the horizon. Hans Delbrück, whom Ranke spoke of as his favourite disciple, acted in this spirit, and did not become a mere echo of his master. "The best," says Goethe, "is not made manifest by words." The best in Ranke was his historical instinct: the way in which he loved the forms, the contradictions, of historical changes, without being enslaved by them; the way in which, having no crazes, no fixed ideas, he could be intensely interested in things without clinging to them unduly; the way in which he was free from illusions about Cæsar or Napoleon or Frederick II, and for that very reason could understand the ratios between the men and their entourage. It is precisely in the same spirit, the spirit of his teacher, that Delbrück warns specialists and those inclined to over-simplification against his own writings. In the introduction to his *Geschichte der Kriegskunst* he declares that those only will gain advantage from it who study it "not merely as persons interested in classical, medieval, or modern history, but as persons who take the book as a whole and as a contribution to universal history. . . .

"My aim has been to write . . . history . . . in the spirit of Leopold von Ranke."

It was because Delbrück believed in the universal elements that originate out of the numberless movements of an epoch, because he was in search of the creative ties uniting all the branches of science and in search of the fellowship to which all varieties of analysis belong, and because he thus became a writer of universal history—that he was able to make so many discoveries in this limited and highly specialized field without himself ever becoming a specialist. When any one describes a single drop of water from a thousand aspects, his labours may produce a book no less interesting and important than will be the outcome of the labours of another who, on the same number of pages, describes the relations between the five continents—provided always that the former is not a mere specialist in the study of waterdrops. Any one can become a specialist, if he has but a single talent, that of having been able to sit glued to his desk ever since he emerged from childhood. It is only the few who are capable of being more than specialists, capable of grasping interconnexions, and thus capable of turning the work of specialists to account. Specialists are no more than porters, persons very necessary as aids to those who explore the wide country of independent thought, but persons whose capacities are strictly limited. Among professional historians, Delbrück was the last to possess encyclopædic knowledge, the last who within his specialized domain was able to sparkle with the brilliancy of the philosopher, the man of letters, the economist, and the professional soldier, the last who elucidated his chosen theme with the assistance of the data of experimental and exact science. The useful is commonly "old," and the disagreeable is in most cases "new." Non-professional thinking was the glory of the eighteenth century, the dream and the reality in which Schelling and Wilhelm von Humboldt lived. In contemporary life, new idols have replaced the old. Heavy-footed specialists, armed with ponderous tomes, defend the boundaries of their chosen province, and, sullen of mien, bar the way to all but initiates. Those on the other hand who boast themselves encyclopædists usually run to the opposite extreme, being content with outward seeming, and satisfied to rely on ignorance as their chief weapon against the specialists. Amid this clamour of contending forces, Delbrück worked out a method of his own. The sources remained of fundamental importance to him, and yet he would not accept them as decisive unless they were consistent each with the others. He criticized them one and all, guided by the doctrine of probability. The records of a particular battle were checked by his knowledge of the marching powers of the average soldier, the weight-carrying capacity of the average horse, and in this way he obtained logically consistent results. Yet he was not hidebound by logic, knowing as he did, dialectically, that quantitative changes can become qualitative (though this does not necessarily happen). Delbrück was wont to speak of his way of criticizing the sources as "practical criticism." His method was a combination of that of the specialist with that of the logician. Through its application, the sources were clarified and purified. He reconstructed the battles of the past, directly apprehended the effects of the first use of the mariner's compass, smelled the first gunpowder, looked through the first spy-glass, read the first page delivered by the printing-press, greeted Columbus on his return from America, rejoiced over the discovery of the sea-route to the East Indies, over the first sight of the Pacific Ocean, over the first circumnavigation of the globe. Thus it was that he arrived at a result which, however simple, was shocking to those who relied on accumulated stores of erudition: "It is really true that not the Persians but the Greeks had the advantage of numbers, that Alexander was not leading a small force when he set out to conquer the Persian Empire . . . that the barbarian armies which threatened the civilized world were always very small, that the Romans usually had the advantage of numbers when they won their victories over the Gauls and the Teutons, that the knightly method of warfare preceded the rise of the feudal system and did not (as is commonly supposed) develop out of feudalism."

War is the leading problem of mankind, of history, and of politics. For that very reason there has been more fiction written about battles than about anything else in the world. Vainly does Thucydides, the materialistic historian, utter warnings in the second book of his *History of the Peloponnesian War* against thinking too much about "heroes." He writes: "War is mainly conducted, not by weapons, but by money." Since the first fights of the heroes, each successive generation has added a fresh varnish of romance to the story of ancestral battles; but these exaggerations and improbabilities always contain a kernel of fact. Thus it is that the fanciful accounts of battles invariably originate out of the two poles which are interconnected and did in very truth decide the issue—the valiancy of the combatants and their numbers. War, however, obstinately conceals, not only its profounder causes, but also its individual actions. In war, the plague of mankind and a proverbial theme for simpletons and demagogues of all parties and all shades of opinion, Delbrück discerns the basic factors of the historical process. "The conditions of war-making," he writes, "are the most fundamental elements of national existence. The entire political and social structure of Europe is transformed when there is a change in army organization. The standing army was a perpetual bone of contention between sovereign princes and their estates, and the upshot of the struggle made the rulers absolute." Changes in the history of warfare usually take place in a way "which no theoretician has advocated, no philosopher has formulated, and no one has ever foreseen." Delbrück the historian, studying particular battles, came across facts which had profoundly important bearings, and only in this way became explicable. If, moreover, he could move thus freely in his critical explanations, it was because a greater than himself, Carl von Clausewitz, had previously, in *Vom Kriege,* analysed the political antecedents of war. Today it sounds like a truism to declare that "war is the continuation of policy by other means." But the axiom was one whose theoretical truth had to be studied from every conceivable angle, had to be illustrated by actual happenings, so that the narrower historical significance of war might be made plain, even though its profounder meaning should still be inexplicable.

Upon this soil Delbrück made discoveries which will for all time remain the essential preliminaries to any further objective work upon the history of warfare. Thus it was that a historian, working within his own special domain, proved victorious over the specialists, and succeeded in establishing the specialty upon a new foundation.

Advertisement, or Farewell to Europe

ADVERTISEMENT

I

ANY man who has succeeded in unriddling why, on great occasions, he wears a tall hat, will perhaps be able to guess why the negroes in Timbuctoo are so fond of decking themselves out in gay-coloured feathers. But the commodity is even more enigmatic than a ghost. Those who would understand it must not only be acquainted with the chaos of crowded towns; they must have studied their own hearts. The man of business, who must know (if he is to be successful) how his own inmost personality is clad, is aware that the consumer craves for "moral" as well as for material goods. Thus both the seller and the buyer want a divinely ordained system of ethics embodied in the commodity. Just as the stars shine boldly in the heavens, so do countless posters proclaim the inner metaphysical value of Moonlight Soap, Trumpington's Tooth-Paste, the Little Ink-Bath Fountain Pen, and other articles of daily use. Each of these is recommended by some learned expert; all of them are "scientifically" endorsed. Rationalized economics aims at reducing the source of life into innumerable droplets, using logarithms to facilitate the work of calculation. Man's needs, his longings, his most intimate wishes, and his favourite amusements, form the data for a study of the prospects of a favourable market. They are analysed as meticulously as the parts of the cadaver are cut to pieces by anatomical students in the dissecting-room. Lip-service, at any rate, is continually being paid to the goddess Hygeia. All that we make and all that we do, is made or done for a purpose. The ideal modern human being is like a horse led to the water. When the devotee of contemporary science eats his dinner, he does not do so in the spirit of the glorious Rabelais; he is not thrilled with delight, his imagination does not run riot before the roast, his eyes do not sparkle when he looks at the sauce, his mouth does not water with anticipation. He does not eat under the promptings of appetite, but because he knows that his body has to be fed. When he goes for a walk, it is not because he wants to enjoy the beauties of nature, but because he is afraid of getting fat. He sleeps nine hours for the good of his health. He marries because marriage will save him from wasting his time in making love to his friends' wives. He travels in order to learn foreign languages, and not in order to amuse himself. He reads with the practical aim of fitting himself to earn a better livelihood.

Caution dogs his footsteps. "Science" talks to him from the frying-pan, the nuptial couch, the novels he reads, the affects that stir him, the wares he buys; "science" is inhaled with every breath he draws, until his whole life is impregnated. His sofa, his shoes, his collar, his car, his house—all, all, must be "guaranteed" and "patented." The very chair he sits in must be equipped with every possible gadget, and must at the same time be simple and practical; it should also be convertible at will into a bed, a bath, an airplane, a stretcher, a motorcycle, and a paddle-boat.

Men find it so hard to get along without hocus-pocus. That is why commodities are apt to prove unsaleable unless they have an "ethical" aim.

"Morality" organizes production, is an important element of the labour process, is as indispensable a raw material as iron or coal. But if hundreds of thousands of young women are to wear dresses cut after the same fashion, if the same chromos are to hang on the walls of every new house, if millions are to buy the same car and dream the same dream of happiness—puffery must first conquer the mind and the memory, must grip the buyer in its serpentine convolutions, must speak with the authority of absolute conviction; the president of the United States must endorse "the ethical value of advertisement," and the Department of Commerce must testify to "truth in advertising." A trader who fails to subscribe to this propaganda is likely to pay for his dissent by finding himself in the bankruptcy court. An American of an earlier day, Benjamin Franklin, who foresaw the coming glories of U. S. capitalists, wrote to his son: "Do business with men who advertise. They are intelligent, and you will not lose by it." Franklin was high priest of this ethos, and through the fumes of incense he perceived the mission of the new era. For him the making of money was as sublime as the crescent moon, as immortal as an idea. "He that kills a breeding sow, destroys all her offspring to the thousandth generation. He that murders a crown, destroys all that it might have produced, even scores of pounds. . . . For £6 a year you may have the use of £100. . . . He that idly loses 5s. worth of time, loses 5s., and might as prudently throw 5s. in the river. He that loses 5s., not only loses that sum, but all the advantage that might be made by turning it in dealing, which, by the time that a young man becomes old, amounts to a comfortable bag of money."

This maximalist programme of capitalism originated as the prologue to wage labour, as a muted trumpet-blast, as a silent prayer, as a devoutly held dogma, as a mighty foreboding of things to come. Man was subject to these laws. Gain was not an end in itself, and it was for his soul's good that the pious man had to make money out of his fellows. Even in this extremely material domain, the idealists, the inspired, are the most successful practitioners. The commodity, having become a part of our natural environment, not only determines our thoughts and feelings, but dictates its own slogans and compels us to talk its language—the creature thus ruling the creator. The *Marseillaise* of Somebody's Safety Razor circles the world. The masses as consumers must be supplied with catchwords, just as they are supplied with apt phrases in the political field. Their wishes are formed for them by hoardings in the daytime and by illuminated signs at night. The categorical imperative decides. "Your shoes soled and heeled while you wait!" "Buy the *Daily Wail* and be insured against accident!" "Cure your heart-trouble by drinking Alkaloid-Free Coffee!"

Education by formulas of this sort produces people worthy of them. Advertising slogans obscure the heavens, disfigure the countryside, uglify the walls and the stamp-books of our post-offices, almost monopolize the programmes at our theatres, and insinuate themselves into literature and philosophy. A novelist who is climbing to fame writes: "Learn how to advertise, then you will be able to outstrip Stefan George and Rilke. When you are in a tram, study the advertisements. As you get out, ponder the couplet: 'In traffic you'll escape the worst, if you think of safety first.' I like that haunting strain. It brings us closer to the great heart of mankind."

II

This undefinable mankind can be caught in the act: in the various manifestations, movements, forms of being and of thought, which comprise an "epoch" and distinguish that epoch from others, just as the peaks in a mountain chain have diverse aspects. An epoch, a period, a century, a decade, cannot be "out of joint," any more than the ocean can wander from its bed. But the interpreters of this planet of ours, the human beings who dwell on it, deduce from their finest dreams, from their splendid and often inevitable longings, fixed ideas to which they give the name of ideals. When the epoch does not respond to the uneasy feelings of those who live in it, when the age refuses to be guided by maxims which are sometimes clear and shrewd and sometimes obscure or ridiculous, sensitive souls declare, like Hamlet, that the time is out of joint. In reality, it is mortal man who errs, not the epoch in which he lives, for no epoch has principles whence we might deduce particular relations; it has only vital circumstances in which everything manifests itself and to which everything leads. These vital circumstances—individuals with their work, their pleasures, and their fatigues; with the streets they throng; with the factories in which they toil, the evenings in which they make love, the goals they seek, and the sorrows they endure—form the substratum of all ideas, of all tones. The wonder-working phrases indispensable to those who have wares to sell, whether political or material, are rooted in such matters, and light up necessity as a thousand candles light up a mirror.

To expect anything else is to be a dreamer, or else to be one of those confirmed malcontents whose supreme dread it is that they may be supposed to share the prevailing opinion.

Yet even a god would laugh at the surprising manifestations of change in the social being, for the new is comic in proportion to its unexpectedness. "One who considers these things in a grave mood," writes Luther's contemporary, Sebastian Franck, "would not be surprised were his heart to break for sadness; but he who takes them lightly, after the manner of Democritus, cannot but split his sides with merriment." Hegel, who had no sense of humour, and who in the stilly night wished to hear the tones of all epochs that he might better understand his own, discovered in this medley of types and trends the unity of opposites, their formal identity. Just as a coin has an obverse and a reverse which must be taken together to comprise the unity of the stamped disk of metal, so has every epoch two fundamentally contrasted aspects which constitute the epoch as a whole. American advertisement, the flower and the fruit of a capitalism unhampered by tradition, of a capitalism which blows men whithersoever it listeth in pursuit of its aim to effect sales, and more sales, and yet more sales, influences the masses in much the same way as does the flower and the fruit of Russian socialism, which is likewise unhampered by tradition. True, in order to dispose of their wares the Americans sweeten them with the honey of morality, whereas the Russians cannot do this for they have no wares to sell. But they have a commodity to dispose of, "abstract morality cut loose from ordinary wares," and their way of disposing of it is precisely the same as that of their reputed opposites, the Americans.

Fifty or a hundred thousand persons attend a Moscow demonstration. They are underfed and poorly clad, tired and listless. At the factory or other bureaucratically controlled institution where they work, a special early-closing day has been announced. Spies are watching at the gates. The Kremlin State is still paying for the use of these "leisure" hours, and, though it is giving the workers a holiday, it intends that holiday to be spent in the prescribed fashion. Any one who fails to march in the procession will be regarded as a deserter, and will be treated as such; the spies will report his defection; he will be listed as in league with Rothschild or Hindenburg; he will forfeit his place at the bench or his right to dip his pen into the bureaucratic inkpot. A brief announcement in today's *Pravda* will tomorrow bring hundreds of thousands to the Red Square to demonstrate in front of the Lenin mausoleum. What a western European government can do only by the indirect utilization of a complicated apparatus, the Soviet dictatorship can achieve by a few lines of print. But it is now that the real work begins. The many, the listless, those who have to be pressed into the service of enthusiasm, hardly know why the gods of the Communist Manifesto have summoned them to a demonstration. The posters on the walls, the hundreds of transparencies carried in the procession and seeming to move it along as sails moved the ships of the

Spanish Armada, the coloured caricatures, all bear the same legend: "To the gallows with MacDonald," and you see him hanging there, though it be only in effigy.—"Turn your faces towards the villages!" Here the cartoonist has designed banners showing urban operatives and peasants, who have joined hands.—"We are defending our Socialist Fatherland!"—"Lenin told us to establish a worldwide Soviet Republic!"—"In five years we shall have outstripped Europe!"—Whatever happens to be the slogan of the hour is given especial prominence, is sung in chorus, and trumpeted from the housetops. Thus the memory is placed in thrall, words are hammered into the skull, the brain is kneaded, the will is moulded. As with all advertisement, suggestion, seduction, and hypnosis function as substitutes for reasoned conviction. When Ivan gets home, he takes a few phrases with him. He knows now that MacDonald is a traitor; that he himself, Ivan, must learn to handle a rifle, to save his country from threatened destruction; that if his room in Moscow is narrow, dark, and dirty, the president of the French Republic is to blame; and that China is being gobbled up by bandits.

All these assertions are voiced with apodictic confidence, and are intended to inspire the same sense of absolute conviction as the illuminated signs in Broadway, when they announce that this article or that, as sold at some particular establishment, is unrivalled for quality and price. The twentieth-century problem, how to influence the masses, has been solved in the same way. The parallelism between New York and Moscow goes farther. Everything American is popular in Russia; the revolution is official, but Americanism is in vogue. Even the dictators have to follow the prevailing fashion. If new buildings are run up in Moscow, they must be at least ten stories high. The hungry cadgers in the street, who sell matches in order to while away the time that must elapse before the definitive establishment of socialism, call their wares "Amerikansky." The mere name acts as a recommendation.

The American poster and the Russian are called upon to ignore frontiers, that they may act like the Cross in partibus infidelium. The Cross was no mere sign; it was a symbol of the faith, of dominion, of salvation. The posters from the West and the posters from the East have already effected a conquest of part of the European continent, combining unawares in the work of penetration, supplementing one another, fertilizing the ground for one another's benefit, moulding people's thoughts to make them more susceptible. Factories which have been bought by Americans sell their products after the American fashion, and Russian catchwords influence the mentality of millions of western Europeans. The minds thus prepared crave for a suitable art and a congenial literature. American and Russian films satisfy the demand, and keep up the effect as they do so. The "Russified" theatre proclaims (like the Russian hoardings) moralizing slogans, which beg the question at issue, drown dissent in clamorous assertion, sing the sansculotte Te Deum, and make as many glib promises as an American life-insurance agent.

Two hosts which have discarded tradition, that of Soviet Russia and that of the United States of America, are marching separately and yet side by side, being both inspired with the same determination—to make an end of the agelong supremacy of European thought; to annihilate German classical philosophy, the British materialists and sceptics, the French school of Port-Royal. For to both of them toleration seems an alien and inimical idea. Born on the soil of old Europe; offspring of the Renaissance, Catholicism, Protestantism, revolution and counter-revolution—toleration, outliving the past, led to autonomy of thought. This independence of the individual is a narrow road leading between dark forces. Associated with it is the memory of heroic moments in which men thoughtfully confronted the universe, and, inspired with the conviction of their own fundamental reasonableness, were not disheartened by their own pettiness and inconsequence. This devotion to the abstract in man developed a unity of culture; promoted taste, a sense of proportion, a dislike of bombast, of ideological blackmailing, of subjugation by an extraneous will; engendered tactfulness; and taught the eloquent to avoid declaiming about themselves, their opinions, their work, and their principles, when others might find such declamation tedious.

The manufacturer, of course, has to advertise his wares, and it may even be his business to stimulate desire in order to counteract a "damnable frugality." But on a higher level, upon a more extended basis of propaganda, he ought still to be guided by certain restrictions which the old-time shopkeeper, in more modest surroundings, had unquestioningly to accept. When the shopkeeper hangs out a sign, he must not do it in a way that will incommode the passers-by. His salesmen must not run after possible customers, tweak them by the coat-tails, buzz round their ears like flies. But the meretricious reputation of modern advertised wares seems to say to the reader: "You have only learned to read to enable you to spell out our advertisements. The man we like best is the man who cannot read anything else."

In face of the catchwords of the great business enterprises, the catchwords which threaten to drive all but advertisement out of the newspapers; in face of the tyranny of the secretaries of political parties, who want our theatres and our books to be mere vehicles for electoral propaganda or mere genuflections before the dictators; in face of the bellowings of fulsome praise—what can console us except our own sense of toleration; a freedom from censoriousness in our judgments of men and things; the recognition that new problems are seeking solution, new forms are becoming established, new ideas are finding expression? Thus inclinations, thoughts, and customs will be transformed. The passion for service, the enthusiasm for power, spout as if nothing existed in the world but themselves. And yet the main sources of existence lie deeper. Mankind is not only a bazaar, not only a popular assembly, not only a farmyard for dictators to rule as they please; it is also a church, a cathedral, in which every one snuggles up to something abstract. The magical twilight discloses possibilities of happiness. The past of Europe cannot perish from off the face of the earth, for by that past was this temple builded. Thought recognizes its own uniqueness and, remembering, resists suppression. It refuses to bid farewell to Europe.

Mythology of Dictatorship

(Georges Sorel)

SOREL

I

NEVER yet has the red-gold glory of dawn shone upon the face of a dictator who had been spending the night in a desperate wrestling with the theory of dictatorial power. The dictator, like every being on earth, is self-justified by his own feeling. Maybe our political ideologists are inclined to overestimate theory. What is termed the intellectual conscience would appear to be nothing more than an aroma of the study.

The experiences of revolution have shed no light upon the science of politics. Even democracy —though it gives every one the right of self-determination, and (acting on the assumption that we are one and all persons of outstanding importance) very politely at considerable intervals hands a ballot paper to each among several million ladies and gentlemen—even democracy has done nothing to further political thought.

Machiavelli, who was not an elector and who, contrasted with Cesare Borgia, was in the civic sense as devoid of rights and powers as a fly, has, notwithstanding this, never yet been excelled in political wisdom by any elector in the world. In the arena of political theory his book, after the lapse of more than four centuries, still puts commonplaces to shame. As a rule politicians only seem to know anything about political phenomena so long as they are not asked for lucid, precise, brief, and convincing explanations.

The political term most in use, "nation," still lacks a definition generally acceptable to logicians and men of science. National character, we are told, will account for everything. National character, like life itself, is a mystical substance which can explain concrete qualities. If, for instance, the ancestors of Messrs. Cohn and Meyer were already thriving men of business in the ghetto, and if their houses still flourish today, how does it help when we explain their success as an outcome of the Jewish national character, seeing that the explanation itself has to be explained? National character is so universal, and so universally understood, that Tom, Dick, and Harry argue about it freely over their pots of beer. How much easier to die for a cause, than to grasp its inmost significance! When sage professors discuss national character, especially in moving times, they seldom say anything more worth listening to than the casual remarks of the tap-room orator. The professor is more abstract, and therefore less comprehensible. The man in the pub, on the other hand, is downright. He thumps the counter with his fist until the glasses ring, and in a second or two comes to the same conclusion as the professor who has laboriously developed a thesis in five hundred pages of print. If any one takes the trouble to reread the theories of national character expounded during the late war in the lecture theatres of our most famous universities and subsequently vouchsafed the dignity of cold print, he will be reduced to despair that learned authorities should with vast erudition make so much ado about nothing. In general, works on the history of politics can only describe events, and cannot really explain them. It is easier for those who write upon such topics to cite past instances and to venture prophecies than to describe the living present, for the present is in a flux and is therefore as hard to follow as a wave in motion.

II

If it be true that political activities ultimately depend upon stimuli that affect the will, then we have far more trustworthy information concerning the motives and voluntary actions of plant-lice and dogs than concerning those of human beings.

The American investigator, Jacques Loeb, in a lengthy series of observations, has found that winged aphids, which have been crawling hither and thither in any and every direction, invariably face about to crawl towards a source of light brought into their neighbourhood. All the aphids react in the same way. The light is the triumphal arch to which they are magically attracted; it is their ideal, the goal of their desires. The direction in which they move is determined by the physical stimulus of light-rays. Certain small crustaceans can be made similarly "heliotropic" by the influence of particular acids, which decide the traffic of a world that seems to us so small. For the aphids, light is their "will," just as gravity is the "will" of a falling stone or a circling planet.

The Russian physiologist, I. P. Pavloff, has made a prolonged study of similar reactions of the will in dogs. He found that various activities which, in these companionable beasts, had been currently regarded as the expression of the yearnings of a mind akin to our own, were closely connected with the salivary secretion. Observing the dog's manifestations of lively pleasure at sight of a sausage, he noted the way in which sensibility, happiness and unhappiness, the whole drama of the universe, originated in chemical changes which had nothing whatever to do with the categorical imperative.

Loeb, who is a cautious scientist and never makes an assertion unless he has abundant proofs to back it up, applies the results of his own and Pavloff's experiments to the explanation of human behaviour.

The individual, carried away by the fervour of his ideals, led onward by his hopes, driven by the impetus of his will, sacrifices himself for a thought, dies or suffers in order to satisfy a spiritual craving. "It might be possible," writes Loeb, "that, under the influence of certain ideas . . . chemical changes . . . are produced which increase the sensitiveness to certain stimuli to such an unusual degree that such people become the slaves to them just as the copepods become slaves to the light when carbon dioxide is added to the water."

As compared with these physical stimuli leading to action, forcing the individual to move in a particular direction, driving him towards an unknown goal, logic and reason and consistency are mere epiphenomena, pure formalities, the prejudices of an intellectual. The "intellectual conscience" can only hinder our actions and inhibit our dreams; it cannot initiate activity. Politicians, invigorated by success, encouraged by applause, find no difficulty, therefore, in proudly and confidently proclaiming two opposite opinions regarding the same basic problem. They have no fixed principles, and their only aim is power. For example, on April 6, 1920, Benito Mussolini said: "I set out from the individual, and direct my energies against the State. . . . Down with the State in all its forms, the State of yesterday and the State of today, the bourgeois State and the socialist!" But the very same year (six months later, indeed, when autumn had come) he declared: "Nothing outside the State, nothing against the State, everything for the State!"

Power can exert the same charm upon victors and upon vanquished.

Rebels and extremists, desperadoes of all shades and tints, love power just as ardently as does a worshipful hero who showers blessings. The spirit of these resolutes seeks power amid the tears of privation, the lust for power serving them as daily bread. The halo of force is still a lure to them when the bayonets of extant authority are coercing them. The tyrant who constrains them to his will impresses them even as he does so. There is nothing they despise more heartily than a State authority which harms no one. Force becomes an idol, a myth; and they regard power as the thing-in-itself. Just as the romanticists fancifully evolved the man of love out of love for mankind, so do they confound the force of politics with the politics of force.

From a purely "reasonable" standpoint these devotees of force in politics are no more than chimeras, and do not really exist. But Georges

Sorel, who is one of their leaders, retorts that such a standpoint can only be adopted by a person who still wears the blinkers of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, by a person who clings to a primitive way of thinking, manufactured by philosophers, the bookkeepers of bourgeois profit and loss, the guardians of a self-satisfied order of society.

III

Georges Sorel looked first at the backs of the books in his library, and had only a second-hand acquaintanceship with towns, the countryside, and village life. He was bored by the quiet of the pre-war period. The seemingly stabilized world of economics and civics was as dull to him as are the interminable afternoons to an idler who has no need to work for a living. The invariable successions of contemporary politics were to this thinker as disturbing as would have been a loud-ticking clock on his study table.

He fancied that all men were making the same sort of bricks, to build the same sort of houses. For one who could see only the trappings and not the underlying structure, that pre-war world was becoming more and more firmly established. It was like a room which has just been cleaned and tidied. Whatever happened, happened at the appointed moment. The whole affair worked as smoothly as a railway station with its gleaming trackways, its white lights, and its red signals. In increasing numbers, excellent roads traversed Europe; in increasing numbers, commercial treaties regulated the competition between the great economic rivals; in increasing numbers, there were built schools and hospitals and poorhouses to safeguard civilization against uncontrolled passions and the forces of destruction. Crises could be calculated in advance, and in the event of a thunderstorm every flash of lightning would find a conductor waiting to conduct it to the earth.

These prospects of repose, of comfort, in which a due share of contentment would be weighed out to every one with the same regularity as his daily bread, were extremely disagreeable to Georges Sorel, and reduced him to despair. There would no longer be any need of a Messiah; there would be no salvation, no revolution, no war, no valiant hero, no vengeance, no agony; there would be nothing but the idle chatter of the full-fed. Humanitarianism, excogitated by a degenerate and covetous bourgeoisie to nullify the explosive forces of society and to perpetuate its own rule, seemed to him to involve the doom of mankind. Humanitarianism corrupted the masses, the proletariat, and also the socialists who formed the aristocracy of labour, the really effective minority; it created hypocrites, crafty liars, spineless weaklings, base careerists. Under its sign, life was robbed of all creative elements, and became nothing more than an endless round of routinist, senile intellectualism.

Georges Sorel, whose moods, thoughts, and sentiments were taking this turn, ogled the convinced and outspoken monarchists. He abused Jean Jaurès as a contemptible being who repudiated the use of force, and he extolled Charles Maurras, the champion of royalist power. Sorel, the enfant terrible of socialism, was almost hand-in-glove with this man who was the enfant terrible of the Church—with Maurras who, while declaring that Roman Catholicism was the only possible religion, passed for an atheist, and who, while wanting to deliver the pope from the execrable Hebrews of the Old Testament, was actuated by the desire to interweave his own aphorisms into Holy Writ.

Two decades ago these friendly foes might plausibly be regarded as nothing more than essayists run mad, as intellectuals the end of whose argument was a polemic against their own reasoning. Today, however, one of Sorel's disciples has become lord and master of Italy, the land whose civilization is the oldest in Europe. But an essayist who can command several million rifles is no longer a mere essayist; he has risen to be a factor in the balance of power.

IV

In politics, ideas are often the precipitates of moods. A mood does not burn like the gloomy oil-lamp in a wayside tavern, always ready to flicker out; it is a reservoir from which flow the political energies of individuals and the community. That is why Ernest Renan, writing of the early Christians, remarks: "One only becomes a martyr on behalf of things concerning which no certainty is possible." A mood, being very different from a thought, knows nothing of pros and cons; it floats over the political world like a cloud over the earth, condensing from time to time into the sentiments that determine conduct, just as the cloud from time to time condenses into rain. Like clouds, too, moods have material causes; they are originated by needs, which in their turn are the outcome of lengthy causal sequences rooted in history. They rise from the depths of individual disquiet, having their own symmetry, their own crystalline sheen—although many of their determinants elude measurement, and it is often impossible to trace their causality. What turn they will take, what tint they will assume, what will they may engender, no prophet can foretell. In the dramatic course of what passes by the name of history (which is a succession of minor vexations illuminated by occasional explosions), moods, as reactions against the extant, have always played the chief parts. Half a century before the French revolution, there was a mood of revolt against the rococo. Lace ruffles, a mincing gait, twisted chair-legs, periwigs, and other elaborate conventions, aroused a storm of abuse. In the grey north, at an earlier date, Luther as priest and as human being had, in a mood of individualist romanticism, rebelled against the over-arching cupola of papist dogmas, which in his opinion obscured the light of the faith.

Even those who, professing various doctrines and belonging to various classes and nations, live ostensibly at war one with another, still breathe the same atmosphere. Conservatives, extremists of the Right, extremists of the Left, fascists, and communists, diverse though their respective philosophies may be, have the same fundamental reaction to the extant. Self-satisfied young men or such as are eager to be up and doing, who in other respects are nourished mainly by their mutual enmity, quote the same pages of Nietzsche, Croce, Bergson, and Georges Sorel. Armed with chapters from the same Books of Wisdom, they are ready to cleave one another to the chine. Just as in war both sides pray to the same god, so do these battling champions all extol the same sacrifice, all clamour for the same universal destruction, out of which the wonders of a life renewed will arise like a phœnix from the flames.

The heroic alone lifts itself above the earth; the heroic alone is able to refashion; he only can achieve who aims at the impossible; only the epic impresses itself upon reality and persists in the folk-memory. What is left of the Napoleonic campaigns? The soldier, who stormed across Europe; he alone survives in history!

Georges Sorel, the heir of an extensive culture, seeks happiness and enthusiasm, desires by means of ecstasy to get the better of the wearisome repetitions of life, kindles torches to celebrate orgiastic excitements. In imagination he creates forms which shine like the multi-coloured Madonna in a stained-glass window when the sun strikes through. Mythology is to provide dull substance with a splendid shadow; mythology is to give this humdrum life of ours new meaning, new dreams, and a new will. Mythology, he opines, will not deign to argue with those who would like to subject the gospel of force to criticism in matters of detail.

Force, nothing but force, can provide a new source of invigoration. Force is sublime, is virtue embodied; force conjures up a wealth of stimulating imagery, arouses glorious sentiments, supplies the requisite driving energy, intensifies every action, gives existence a magnificent impetus.

Like a second-rate expressionist painter, he combines all the shades of feeling but never succeeds in producing an integrated picture. Yet he himself regards this very imperfection as his strength.

His myth, his guiding fiction, enlists the unconscious in its service; it enrols all energies and all persons, as the wind sweeps the leaves in autumn; it drives the individual onward to heroic deeds, towards the unknown shore of the undiscovered future.

The sums of history, which are but the interpretations of doers and thinkers, never work out; they remain unfinished studies, like our mortal lives. After great collective efforts, after wars and revolutions, we wander among the ruins and shed tears in the moonshine. The late war was the mightiest explosion of its kind on record, bringing in its train the most extensive of transformations—and the net upshot has been "as you were"! Thus the mystical mood of Sorel and his disciples is a rebellion against the narrowness of life, against the invariability of natural successions, against the inexorable restriction of our possibilities. From the outlook of traditional rationalism, it is a ludicrous revolt against the universe. Yet absurdity has always been a power in the world! This revolt has emerged from the domain of mere literature to become politics. It has done so because the masses have been shaken out of the old ruts by changes in the material conditions of existence; because the bacillus of uncertainty has wrought havoc, not only in the boundaries of States, not only in the foundations of private property, but in all our systems of political thought likewise—ranging from conservatism to communism. Before the debacle, the many were still able to console themselves with the crumbs of communism. The few, the leaders of the "irrational," are in search of a new "spirit"; but the masses hunger for new abstract certainties as they hunger for bread.

During the struggles of the Reformation and under stress of the teaching of the humanists, two allied movements were in progress. On the one hand there was a rebellious surge of new economic desires, and on the other hand in the world of thought an attempt was being made to effect a thoroughgoing revision of the traditional. It was then that Sebastian Franck, a man of genius studying the psychology of the masses, wrote: "Whatever you may do, the world will still insist upon having a papacy, for people cannot get on without it. The world will and must have a pope at whose orders it will believe. Whether by theft or by exhumation, a pope it must and will have. Whenever you deprive it of the papacy it already has, it hastens to seek out a new one."